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*of*  
MANHATTAN

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HIGHLIGHTS OF MANHATTAN









THE BEGINNING OF BROADWAY

# HIGHLIGHTS *of* MANHATTAN

*by*

WILL IRWIN

*Illustrated by*

E. H. SUYDAM



WITHDRAWN

*New York*

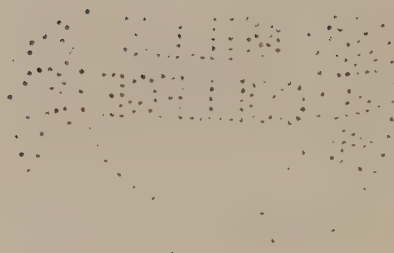
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To  
M. M.  
WHO PERSUADED US TO DO THIS JOB  
WILL IRWIN  
E. H. SUYDAM



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## Highlights of Manhattan





# Highlights of Manhattan

## *Chapter I*

### THE BATTERY

WHEN a tourist or even a native begins systematic rambling in most great cities, he must first determine where to start. His choice depends largely on what spoil he hopes to bring back from his adventuring.

Paris for example. Is the observing loiterer most interested in its antiquities and monuments? He will, if well advised, set out from the Ile de la Cité, where Julius Cæsar found the tribe of Parisii lurking among the river-reeds, where Notre Dame and Sainte-Chapelle preserve the glories of the Middle Ages, where the conciergerie still embodies the Revolution. Has he come to see life in Paris—crowds, cafés, shops, restaurants, revues? He will start his course from the Café de la Paix, to the modern Parisian the heart of the known universe. Does he crave art? He will make straight for the Louvre.

Similarly the instructed visitor to Rome will begin with the Forum, the Corso, or the Vatican, according to whether the relics of ancient Rome, the fuss and bubble of

modern Rome, or the majesty of churchly Rome most inspires his imagination. In London, which amounts to a gathering-up of many antique communities, the choice is less simple. Lucas, consulting all tastes, decides that Hyde Park Corner, which he calls "Number One, London," serves best for a compromise starting-point.

But for imperial New York, become even in our own time the greatest of all cities, Nature herself has selected the one inevitable starting-place. The island of Manhattan lies guarded by its subsidiary islets in the shape of a primitive bone needle. The point thrusts itself toward the Bronx; the head faces the harbor entrance and the sea. On that curve of shore rimming an island paradise of forests and hills, rivers and brooks, wild-fowl and deer, the first white men of Manhattan built their huts. There grew up the metropolis of the colonial Dutch; there stood the aristocratic quarter of the little city—twenty thousand souls or so—which shed the first blood of the Revolution. From the hills just behind it, Washington governed these United States. Stuyvesant and Minuit, Clinton and Jay, Hamilton and Adams, Putnam and Greene—around this district centers whatever memories of the Founders New York may preserve. In it, those relics of early American building which grudging progress has granted New York still raise their mutilated walls. Above it towers that first range in the cordillera of giant sky-scrapers. Perhaps these futuristic pinnacles give our metropolis its widest fame; for foreign cartoonists, caricaturing Uncle Sam, feel obliged always to put a tangle of box-like towers in the background.

Finally, just to the east and west of that point where

the Dutch set up their stockade, their state-house and their busy gallows, stretches a foreign population varying in racial strain from Lithuanian to Turk, from Bohemian to Syrian. In Battery Park you will hear during the course of a morning's loafing a dozen languages. Where the park blends with the battered foot-hills to the great range of sky-scrapers, these humble folk jog elbows with the spruce clerks and smart stenographers of the down-town business district, and you have a cross-section of the city in its workaday mood. By kaleidoscopic impression of races, tongues, and breeds, then, the southern border of the island typifies this most cosmopolitan city not only of America but of the world.

So I advise the leisurely tourist, if he would see New York thoroughly and proportionately, to begin with Battery Park where for two hundred years most visitors entered the island and where no one except an occasional immigrant or a very distinguished guest of the city ever enters it for the first time any more. Take elevated or subway southward, sink yourself in the latest afternoon edition, and forget external things until the guard calls "All out!" and you ascend or descend to that bit of faded greenery—now fighting a losing fight against gases and vibrations—with which the city fathers have so happily capped the island.

There the harbor lies open to view, always misty and mauve-gray and very busy; you will skirt East River and North River for many miles before you find another break in the variegated monotony of wharves and warehouses. For the land ends here with a plain sea-wall to which small craft, mostly on pleasure bent, lash themselves sidewise.

And because the surface of the park slopes imperceptibly seaward, one has the illusion of standing below the level of the further waters. Especially when the tide is running in, the bay seems to be coming at you in a gray surge.

Through the mists which soften these waters even on the brightest day, rises the soft, blue-green splash which is the Statue of Liberty. To the right of that most famous object in all New York, Ellis Island lifts its red buildings with their four domed towers. On an especially misty day, the towers give that group the effect of a distant Venetian island; on a bright day it is a horror!

Against the distant Jersey shore grow forests of masts and cranes. And through the mists between, hurry the craft of the second harbor in the world for tonnage and importance, the first for bustle and ado. Fussy tugs seem to elbow aside long barge-loads of freight-cars; ferries and multi-windowed passenger steamers, plying up the Hudson or the Sound, dispute right of way with rusted, streaked, Atlantic freighters; liners with high-bred manners thrust their sharp bows out of the haze and turn their stately courses to right or left, according as they are minor nobility of the South American, West Indian, or Panama-Pacific runs, or the very great ladies which ply to Southampton and Liverpool, Havre and Cherbourg. From Battery Park as from no other lookout on Manhattan—except perhaps the upper windows of certain sky-scrapers—you may review the parade of the harbor.

This is all historic ground. Where the major area of the park stands was once an isolated islet; the original shore-line runs somewhere through the foundations of the

sky-scrapers to the north. "Weeper's Hook" the colonial Dutch called it. For it was always the best point from which to view the harbor; and there, in the days when seafaring was as dangerous as war, the widows-to-be used to stand and wave their husbands over the horizon. Weeper's Hook it became again during the hectic spring and summer of 1918. Probably half of our expeditionary forces in the World War sailed from New York Harbor; and all day long crowds stood at the Battery sea-wall watching the transports with their harlequin camouflage vanish into the mists of distance and tragic uncertainty.

From a steel mast above you streams the American flag. At almost the same point stood a pole which for more than a hundred years flew the British ensign. In order to make it harder for the patriots, the British, on departing forever, nailed their colors to the peak and greased the pole. In my school-days, "American History for Children" used to tell the story of that young patriot who shinned up the pole grease and all, and changed the colors at the masthead. Whenever I climbed a tree I used to play that I was that glorious boy.

On the rocks under foot stood the first battery of guns defending the harbor. And somewhere within a stone's throw Nichols must have put ashore when he came to take possession of New Amsterdam on behalf of the Duke of York, to persuade sturdy but sensible Peter Stuyvesant that there was no use in fighting, and to replace the benevolent oligarchy of the resident Dutch with the absolute but disdainfully tolerant rule of the Stuarts.

History more recent if less obvious stands to right



and left. That bulky but low and nondescript building now undergoing a restoration of its outside is the Aquarium, a famous show-place of the municipality and a mild joke to the citizenry of New York. For, next to the Rubber-neck Wagon, it is to our local humorists the symbol of the out-of-towner. The true New Yorker, popular superstition holds, never darkens its doors. He spites but himself; the flashing forms and colors of tropical sea-life, viewed in the shaded half-light of its interior, are poignantly beautiful.

In the days when a narrow estuary separated Weeper's Hook from the mainland, the Aquarium Building was a fort from which thirty guns poked their noses over the water. When in 1833 the increasing range of naval guns called for a more distant line of defense, the fort became the Castle Garden Opera House. Here in the fifties came Jennie Lind to sing herself into the hearts of New York with "The Last Rose of Summer." She was perhaps the first among the great foreign artists to feel the characteristic hospitality of New York audiences; Forrest, her eminent predecessor in such a venture, stirred up an Anglo-phobic riot. Not even Caruso, in the early years of this century, created such a furor. The antique shops of Madison Avenue are selling even to this day those Jennie Lind rum-bottles out of which our rustic chivalry used to drink her health.

Then, as early as 1855, the northward movement of the residence district rendered this locality unprofitable for a theater. Even before this, third-class passengers from Europe had always landed at the Battery stretch of sea-



wall. For their examination and accommodation the government took over the fort, and it became the Castle Garden of old-fashioned slang—symbol of the greenhorn.

In 1895 arose the Ellis Island immigration station before mentioned; and our new citizens began coming ashore at the Barge Office on the eastern boundary of Battery Park. The post-war immigration laws have almost ended this custom. More and more, foreign third-class passengers are examined in the ports of their native lands and discharged when the steamer drops its passengers at the West Side docks. The stream of immigrants through the tapestried-brick porticoes of the new and pleasing Barge Office has dwindled to a trickle.

I remember most vividly the old, disreputable wooden Barge Office of twenty years ago, when the flood from Northern Europe had not yet receded and when Southern and Eastern Europe were beginning to flow westward full tide. At almost any hour of the day, but especially in the late afternoon, the chains of the landing-apron would drop with an official clang, and bustling officials would herd forth a bewildered, gaping crowd which looked like a pageant of the nations—Russians in fuzzy fur caps, Italian women in blouses and shawls of vivid red or yellow, Greeks and Serbians in clothes of the strange, shiny drab color favored for men's suiting on the northeastern border of the Mediterranean, Polish Jews with curling, scriptural beards.

Just beyond the police line waited all day a slinking group of grafters who lived on the blood of the immigrant. Some were there to exchange his foreign currency for Con-

federate notes, some to sell him a mythical business, some to prey on the young women. That, too, has passed. When nowadays the Labor Department boat discharges its passengers, the crowd around the entrance to the Barge Office consists mainly of social workers for church and racial organizations, intent on giving the greenhorn the right start.

How numbly crawled that emerging caravan of immigrants—as though the haulings and pulse-feelings and probings which they had undergone in the past twelve hours had drained them of capacity for emotion! Usually they did not even gape at the sky-scrapers. Among them all, I remember only one who reacted as you might expect an imaginative human being would in the circumstances. He was a tall, lean, blond youth; from his dress, an Austrian Tyrolese. As he set his foot on the pavement of Manhattan he paused, lifted his chest and head, drew a deep breath, and his face held the light and glory of one who is taking a sacrament. I have wondered since whether he was thinking of Liberty or of Opportunity, and whether the New World fulfilled the expectations expressed in that first exalted glance.

I have numbered these two buildings with the historic sites of Battery Park; considered in the long light of history, they scarcely yield in importance to that spot where the British flag came down from the greased pole. The grandsons of those Germans and Swedes who passed the inspection of Castle Garden in the middle years of the last century, the sons of those stranger people who made the early landings at the Barge Office, are getting on in the New World. More and more with every succeeding edition, do

they elbow into "Who's Who in America." Such of our old stock as go in for genealogy can seldom say at what exact spot that first American ancestor touched the soil of the New World. Even Plymouth Rock may be a mere legend. But the newer strains can. Nine times out of ten, it was Battery Park. Some day, I suppose, the sites of these two buildings will bear tablets erected by that important genealogical society, the Sons of the Steerage.

It is time now to turn around. But do not yet raise your eyes. Fix them first on a symbol of New York which stands at the edge of the straggling grass-plot nearest the sea. This is the city of magnificent buildings and of atrocious public monuments. Even in Central Park you will see nothing much worse than this statue of John Ericsson, who invented the *Monitor*. He stands facing the sea, his form through its frock-coat and his expression through his side-whiskers hurling burlesque defiance at the enemies of the republic. He clutches in his right hand a scroll and hugs to himself with his left a model of the *Monitor* which looks so much like a plasterer's trowel that on first glimpse I always find myself looking for plaster smudges on his broad-cloth. The bas-reliefs around the pedestal are even worse. Well, we have begun to collect Rogers groups; in a decade or so we may educate our eyes to see that Ericsson is at least quaint.

A little further on, the Italian colony have taken off a bit of the curse with Ximenes's monument to Verrazano, who, all good Italians believe, saw this harbor before Henry Hudson was born. The imagined bust of the great adventurer expresses the dauntless sea-hawk that he must

have been, and the female figure before the pedestal has grace and repose.

Now it is time to look upward. But first walk to a point twenty yards or so east of the Aquarium. Stop there—right wheel—raise your eyes—and gasp.

## *Chapter II*

### SKY-SCRAPERS

IT seems an odd thing to say of creations so massive and magnificent as the sky-scrappers; but they have a strangely elusive beauty. Seen from one point of view, they are a meaningless jumble, justifying every charge the foreigner used to bring against them; seen from another, they fall into a composition, as though a Michelangelo or some other super-artist had designed the whole group for a single creation. This stance by the Battery is the first in New York where one gets that magic impression. Above you the skyline rises like a mountain—jagged roof on jagged roof—to the tower of the Standard Oil Building. That I call the most arresting structure, the most tantalizingly satisfactory, in all Manhattan. Rider's guide and the other Baedekers of Manhattan have informed the tourist on its unique history. For when the famous "26 Broadway" bought adjoining properties and decided to expand into the biggest office building of the world, Carrère & Hastings, the architects, faced a curious problem. They wanted to save a few millions of dollars by incorporating the old structure into the new. However, it would not by itself sustain the weight of so many additional stories; and they solved their problem

with the "cantilever plan." The upper stories above the old part rest on a projection from the new—like a man holding a barrel on his arm over another barrel. This necessary patchwork has given it the charm and allure of a structure that "just grew"—the difference between irregular Chartres Cathedral, so long in building that it combines the primitive style of one century with the perfected style of the next—and chastely correct Amiens.

The very accident of its site has favored this huge whimsicality of the Standard Oil Building. It runs along that curve by which the eastern side of Broadway begins; and the lower courses, with their great, cushion-formed stones, give the impression of a mighty fortress. Above this rises the new structure in two wings which extend toward you, as you regard them from your viewpoint near the Aquarium, like the paws of a sphinx. Over these the tower; topped by a pyramid and a single glorified chimney which streams a plume of smoke like incense, and flanked by four obelisks. Below, the building is all solidity and majesty; above, all mystery and romance.

The group of which this tower is the crown creates an illusion not uncommon among the building-masses of Manhattan. It seems impossible to believe that one is not beholding a splendid hill-city, like the Acropolis. At the foot stands the classic Custom House; a little too ornate when it was bright and new, but now softened by the blacks and grays with which age tints marble and granite. Above that, roofs and pillared balconies rise tier on tier as though they clung to the hillside; and finally at the summit upsprings that temple which is the wings and towers of the Standard



Oil Building. There is another view of this group even more stirring to the imagination; but to see it at its best, you must pick your day and hour. Some morning when the skies are overcast and the air is perfectly still, go to Telegram Square under the elevated, put your back to the westward walls, and look up again. The tower with its obelisks just peeps above the bizarre elevated structure and the roofs to eastward. All the lower buildings about it are streaming columns of white smoke against the violet-gray skies. It seems then like the exalted altar of some strange rite; an altar beyond the conception of man—raised by the gods to a greater god.

This, I think, is the most astonishing view of sky-scrapers in mass to be obtained from the soil of our island. To behold them in all their variety, however, you must approach the island by sea; a show reserved, generally speaking, for the incoming European tourist. None of these is ever neutral on the subject of the sky-scraper. To the European these colossi seem either banal, meaningless, the sinister proof of a material civilization, or a startling new achievement in art. And I have often wondered whether it does not all depend upon the first glimpse; whether at the moment when he stampedes to the rail they appear as a jumble, like boxes piled on boxes, or fall into one of their super-compositions.

As the liner passes the Statue of Liberty and the cordillera of Manhattan emerges from the mist, the mass at the right is one of these jumbles. Apart stands the Whitehall Building, broken off from the parent range, like Mount Shasta, "starting up sudden and solitary." It seems from

this point of view lonely and a little stark; a transition form between the old, stiff, box-like sky-scraper and the more imaginative modern variety. The liner passes the nose of the island. Suddenly the Standard Oil tower rises out of the mass. A moment more and you have again the illusion of a hill-city, like that which I have noted from Battery Park; but even higher and more mysterious. And here the wharves and shipping below give an additional prick to the imagination. The docks and the great ships appear only toys in comparison with the gray, towered cliffs above. This waterfront, seen so, always raises in me an emotion so subtle and complex as to defy analysis. There is a sense of romance in it, and awe; and, beyond all that, a curious longing to do or experience something violent. That element in the emotion is akin to what I felt once at Verdun when for the first time I stood among two thousand guns pouring curtain-fire. Carl Ruggles, futurist musical composer, whose immoderation in speech is the delight of his friends, made his first visit to New York some twenty years ago. When he returned to Cape Cod some one asked:

"What did you think of the sky-scrappers?"

"By the Lord," he replied, "I wished they were twenty times higher!"

And I feel that too.

Now, as the liner creeps up river, the view resolves itself into a procession of towers. Standard Oil has become only a spire; next stands the Bankers' Trust, itself topped by an altar-like pyramid giving forth a plume of incense. Higher still rises the Singer tower. Seen from near-by, this structure resembles all too much one of those garish em-







LOWER NEW YORK FROM WOOLWORTH TOWER

broideries which Mr. Singer used to exhibit in the windows of his branch agencies to show what his machine could do. But, from here, distance has blotted out the ornamentation. The tower is just a comely outline, though less romantic, more of the earth, than those of the Standard Oil or the Bankers' Trust. The eternal mists of New York Harbor have played on this building as on the others a curious trick. They have faded its deep red, bronze, and green, even as the buff and gold of the Woolworth, into various shades of gray. On a cloudy morning the sky-scraper district becomes a pattern of slate-colored silhouettes on an ashes-of-roses background.

Beyond the Singer tower rises the great square of the Park Row Building; a survivor of the more primitive era in sky-scraper architecture. Here, however, it belongs in the composition. It makes a contrast for the king-peak of the range, the final thrust of the sky-line—Cass Gilbert's light, lacy, lofty Woolworth Building.

The Woolworth tower has the elusive and contradictory spirit peculiar to the true Gothic style. In some aspects it impresses not with its upreaching lightness but with its solidity and bulk. From the river, it shows its most airy metamorphosis; a needle, stitching the clouds—as Howells said of the Palazzo Pubblico in Siena, not so much a tower as a flight. Though I own a partiality to the Standard Oil group, I cannot quarrel with those who call the Woolworth the most beautiful new structure on Manhattan.

And near-by, its bulk seeming to rise from the very wharves, stands a symbol of the final American achievement in the arts, the New York Telephone Building. Those sky-

scrapers at the point of the island, with their straight rise of twenty, forty, sixty stories and their cañon-like depths between, belong already to a dead era. Never again will New York build exactly like that. When it became apparent that the giant range must before long extend itself from end to end of the island, the city fathers tackled the problem of illumination for streets and lower stories. Architects and physicists studied the angles of light; and the outcome was our new zoning law. No more might the tall buildings arise as straight towers. Every few stories they must be "stepped back" so that the oblique fall of morning or afternoon sunlight might reach the pavement. This police measure not only revolutionized sky-scraper architecture but indirectly put the capstone on the creation of a style. For the "tower architecture" of the sky-scraper long showed no basic originality. The designers simply piled Italian Renaissance on to Italian Renaissance, classic on to classic, Gothic on to Gothic. The very Woolworth Building much resembles Strasbourg Cathedral. The new order forced our architects to invention; and the result was a thing which had no precedent—a true style, so recent that we have not yet given it a name, but as distinctive as Gothic or Classic. Of that, the New York Telephone Building is the first example on Manhattan, and among the noblest. Its bulk fades away stage on stage from massive base to solid tower. Except for the roofs of the successive levels, all the main lines are perpendicular. By emphasis on some of these lines, the designers have distracted the eye from that monotony of windows which curses sky-scraper architecture. For ornament, they rely as yet less on form than on color; tippings and insets

of gilt or variegated stone. Massive, incredibly solid, it is also miraculously light.

The conception is American; and American in more ways than one. The Telephone Building and all its brothers on Manhattan seem descendants from the very earliest native school of architecture. This building is only a sophisticated and glorified version of the old Southwestern Indian pueblo. Except for some remnants in Acoma, Sister of the Eagle, only two exemplars of that style survive—the twin pueblos at Taos.

The Summer House at Taos might have suggested this building, as Strasbourg Cathedral probably suggested the Woolworth Building. In cold fact, the two styles have no historical connection. Adaptation to use is the first law of successful architecture. The Indian pueblo builders raised their structures high because they must needs huddle for defense against raiding enemies; the New Yorker, because he must get all he can out of the most expensive land in the world. The Indian narrowed each successive story partly because he had not found how to build a frame for a square, multi-storied structure, and partly because he wanted sun-balconies for each apartment; the American, because he wanted light in the lower windows. Perhaps, however, one common subtler influence moved them both. As artists, they may have felt rather than perceived that this form harmonizes somehow with the shrewd, violent light of the American continent. But there it is, the accidental culmination of that art which budded in the Mesa Verde caves before Christ was born. And any European with half an eye in his head, seeing the Telephone Building as his ship crawls

to dockage, must realize that here is an original thing; first promise of a strange, alien world and a new flowering of the human spirit.

If you have grown fascinated with sky-scrapers in mass, I recommend another and even more startling view. On some winter afternoon cross to the New Jersey shore and between five and six take the Cortlandt Street Ferry back to Manhattan. At that hour and season it is already dark, but the offices are not yet closed; every window blazes with electric lights from which the mists have filtered out the garishness. The distinction between buildings has disappeared now; only the sky-line wavers faintly against the glare beyond. The rest is just windows—by thousands and thousands. It seems all one enormous structure, a palace beyond human imagination for splendor and height and extent. A primitive man, magicked onto the Cortlandt Street Ferry at this hour, would fall on his knees, believing that he saw the Heavenly City.

Still another view: Late on any fine afternoon but especially in summer, go to the New Jersey heights across the river—opposite Forty-second Street, say. As the sun drops low, it glares into the windows of the sky-scrapers all along the island, and they give back the light in a flare of rose. I know an artist who sometimes crosses the river just to revel in this effect. "It isn't art perhaps," he says, "but it is glory. It ought to be played with trumpets!"



### *Chapter III*

#### FOOT-HILLS AND RUDIMENTS

WE have seen the sky-scrapers in mass. Before we lose ourselves in the shades of their artificial gorges, let us have done with their foot-hills and approaches—that battered and swaying fringe of old buildings plastered against their foundations. Look first at the map, and note how Broadway fades into the generous sweep of State Street, and State Street in turn into lower Whitehall. That thoroughfare ends abruptly, just opposite the wooden pillars of the Brooklyn Ferry, in a cement-covered gray building whose antiquity betrays itself only by wavy uncertainty of line. This really ought to be Number One New York; through other merits than location it deserves the honor. In spite of its modernized, nondescript outside, it is one of the oldest buildings on Manhattan Island and, although it bears no tablets of patriotic societies, not the least historic. Built in 1796 for a warehouse and refinished in 1822 for a tavern, it furnished continuous lodging and refreshment until, less than twenty years ago, it made its last bed and served its last meal as the Great Eastern Hotel. A very humble establishment when it died, for the first fifty years of its existence it had enormous reputation and wide fashionable patronage. And

it smacked always of the sea. The list of its guests, from its opening to its decadence in the seventies of the last century, is the roster of leaders in our navy and our merchant marine. It has served their hot grog to the skippers who raked the Seven Seas for the right whale, who pushed the clipper ships round the Horn to the Sacramento diggings, who brought the Astor furs from the unplumbed shoals of the mysterious Oregon, who outsailed the British and Norse in the race for the China trade, who shifted grumbling from sail to side-wheel paddle, from paddle to screw propeller, but still managed to make the dumb thing work.

The hotel underwent several metamorphoses of name. During my Western youth, I used vaguely to wonder why almost any atrocious eating-house in the Colorado Rockies or on the Arizona Desert was likely to be called the Eagle House or the Golden Eagle. I know now; this old bag of bones which is Number One New York bore those names in the forties of the last century. More in sarcasm than in sentimental memory, the California Argonauts tagged the shacks where they ate their bacon and beans with the title of the best hotel they knew. By the same token, to-day the humblest hotels on the great Western tourist routes call themselves the Ritz. Being of the sea salty, the Eagle House rechristened itself during the seventies in honor of that prematurely built monarch of the seas, the *Great Eastern*.

I feel that I have a small part in the history of the Great Eastern. One day in 1905, its proprietor called up the old "Morning Sun," his favorite newspaper, demanding mysteriously the services of a reporter. The city editor



sent me. I found the hotel staff in a state of pleasant excitement. After a century or so, the Great Eastern had fallen into decadent modern ways and decided to install a bathroom. And the workmen complained that the old beams dulled their tools. The proprietor, who knew something about carpentry, examined the chips. They were A1-grade mahogany! Interested, he ordered borings all over the house. Invariably they struck pay dirt. The beams, the rafters, the whole skeleton were of this same invaluable old wood. He spent some days in the Public Library looking over musty records, but he never found any explanation. He conjectured—and I with him—that a cargo of mahogany arrived in New York Harbor during a glut in the market or a period of depression in the furniture business, and that the skipper, feeling it necessary to realize on his investment, sold at bargain rates to the constructor of this building. I begged the end of a beam, and had it polished. It worked up to a beautiful antique grain and patina. The frame still stands within those cemented walls; and if ever the building is torn down, look for a boom in the business of faking antique furniture.

The old building harbors many trades and professions now—a dentist, a quick-passport-photograph establishment, an agent for Spanish phonograph records, the headquarters of an immigrant society. Beside the news-stand against its southern wall stands, perpetual and impeccable, a recruiting-sergeant of the United States Army. Trade is dull with him, in these days of reduced appropriations. I have seen him at lunch-time selling papers for the news-stand man. And past him jostles the racial jumble of New York. Sea-

tanned sailormen, from that forecastle of the city stretching to eastward, dispute passage with Greeks, Slavs, Scandinavians, South Americans, Italians, Orientals; and they with the chic stenographers and errand-girls of the down-town district. Just before nine and just after five, the very pavement runs brimful with office people, hurrying between the ferry and their jobs. And on any late afternoon, you are likely to encounter a group in peasant costume of Italy or Hungary or the Tyrol, making their way northward with a chattering escort in stiffly worn American clothes. These are immigrants just landed at the Barge Office, en route to their new homes on the Lower East Side.

As we round the curve between Number One New York and Number One Broadway, the smart office employee begins to prevail and the forecastle gives way to the quarter-deck. Officers of a dozen steamship lines and as many races dot the crowds. They are passing with the rolling gait of the sea to and from the steamship offices whose flags give so much color to lower Broadway. Their blue, brass-buttoned uniforms are so much alike that one must read their insignia before determining their nationalities, and their decoration ribbons have the frayed disreputability of old battle-flags—this being an affectation of the merchant marine.

As for the street proper, one who looks discriminatingly enough sees traces of a municipal arrangement which marked this town in the easy and comfortable days before it suspected its imperial destiny. For a century and a half, the aristocratic quarter bordered the sea. No American city maintains this arrangement in face of the demands of



DOCKS AND SLIPS



commerce except Charleston; and Charleston defies all modern rules. Starting north from the Great Eastern: Number 45, a few steps along the line of Whitehall Street, was once a mansion. I would not presume to state its period. It goes at least far back into the nineteenth century. A crazy and tattered overlay of signs—dentist, photographer, furnished rooms—almost conceals the ruins of a good doorway with those Ionic side-pillars and that leaded glass transom-light which in old years marked the portals of fashion. It retains also two of the equally aristocratic oval hall-windows. An upper sash still carries the antique sixteen-paned arrangement. It had a fine ornamental cornice once, but that survives now only in patches.

Turn into State Street. At the apex of its bulge toward Battery Park stand the frames at least of four houses from whose piazzas and balconies our fine gentlemen and ladies used to take the air and view the packets in the harbor. Three of them have been refinished outside to fit commercial use; only the iron-railed front steps, rising to doorways now stripped of pillars and leaded transom, reveal their former uses. The fourth retains externally something of its old elegance. In its prime it would have honored Mayfair. The builder gave it more originality of form than was common in his day. The front steps run diagonally to an irregular recessed piazza from which open two main doors. A corresponding recessed balcony, with high pillars, fronts the second story. Its sixteen-paned sashes yielded long ago to the modern form, and it has grown dingy and battered with many uses. It may go back to the end of the eighteenth century. Certainly Moses Rogers, merchant

prince, lived and entertained there a few years later. Rider's, on I know not what authority, says that H. C. Bunner imagined his "Story of a New York House" in this mansion. I have not resurrected Bunner to find out. For I read that novel in boyhood, remember its sense of the poetic irony in things, and hesitate to blur the impression with the critical sense of maturity. The balcony on which the hospitable Mr. Rogers and his guests used to drink their tea and watch the cargoes unloading has now a guest of which Bunner did not dream; a great statue of the Virgin that seems to bless the sea. For the Mission of Our Lady of the Rosary, a home for Irish immigrant girls, now tenants the Rogers house. The old kitchens in the basement and the long parlors have become chapels.

Beyond, the old fades into the new; the sky-scrapers have begun. Let us, however, hurry on past that gorge which is the beginning of Broadway, past the rear doors of the Custom House, and continue westward to the fringe of Battery Park. Here the spindling elevated structure breaks through the building-mass, and its channel is Greenwich Street. Let not the visitor from the back country confuse this with Greenwich Village. That lies two miles northward. The elevated is here double-tracked. It fills the street so tightly that no ray of sun ever penetrates to the sidewalk between its steel network and the building-line. Usually, when the elevated is run down a street, there follows paralysis; with that intermittent monster rattling the windows every three minutes, owners hesitate to improve their holdings. Here you find an exception—at least on one side. To eastward rise for twenty or forty sheer stories the blank



rear walls of those sky-scrapers which begin Broadway. But on the western side stands another row of old, respectable houses, now fallen into a squalid decay. You must view them piecemeal. From the street level the thrust of the elevated conceals their upper stories, and the passengers on the down-town expresses see only their steep roofs and their dormer-windows. Number Eighteen is perhaps the finest of all. It retains its sixteen-paned windows and its pillared doorway. The leaded transoms and door-lights, especially fine and delicate, are broken, battered, overhung with signs in English and Greek; and on the upper floors a fire-escape flaunts the red-flannel wash of the tenements. At Number Fourteen, the barber who occupies the parlor floor has found use for the iron pillars which support the doorway. He has repainted them as barber-poles. Number Thirty-four, of somewhat later period, must have been a hotel. It sports fine and intricate iron balconies of the kind which one sees in their perfection through the French quarter of New Orleans. These serve now as landings for a fire-escape; flying, as usual, the banners of the Home Laundry.

The upper windows of this row look across the elevated tracks into the smart office suites of the Cunard Building and the Adams Express Building. At noon of any winter day the rear entrances of the sky-scrapers to eastward pour forth stenographers whose fur coats and tight hats are next to the last word in smartness; spruce young clerks trying unavailingly to look like college students; corporation lawyers or company presidents, groomed to the last hair, whose limousines will presently convey them to their clubs for luncheon. This crowd overflows the sidewalk and under the

clanging elevated structures mixes inextricably with the people of the opposite pavement—Greek barbers or fruit-peddlers, themselves rushing to luncheon, Roumanian or Serbian laborers en route to the Balkan employment agencies, Italian girls so newly arrived that they still wear kerchiefs instead of hats. To the stranger in New York, doing it systematically from Battery to Bronx, here is the first visible proof of one peculiarity that marks the town. In no city of the world do riches and bare living, splendor and squalor, lie so close together. To the eye of the expert credit man, the difference of twenty numbers on a given street may be the difference between an address that means "pay when you wish" and one that means "pay cash."

Walk three or four blocks northward, past formless tenement buildings, and at the corner of Carlisle Street stands the battered wreck of another good doorway. Short Carlisle Street, its vistas blocked at one end by a new skyscraper of the step-back school and at the other by the rear wall of the Curb Exchange, is given over now mainly to the junk business. Numbers Four and Six were fine, rich houses a century ago. Number Six still keeps the arched leads of its Gothic windows, and there is a glimpse of a curving stairway with delicate balusters. A block beyond, at the corner of Albany Street, stands the only one of these old-timers which any one has taken the trouble to restore. It was the Planters Hotel in the early nineteenth century, special resort of the Southern visitors to New York; and during the stormy period of indecision before the Civil War, a Secessionist headquarters. The war ruined it as a hotel. There followed years of various uses until in



1912 its present owners restored its outside and opened it as a restaurant. I doubt if the long stretch of windows on the ground floor are authentic reproductions of the Planters as it stood in 1825. But at any rate they harmonize with the graceful, old-fashioned sweep of the curved corner, the leaded dormers, the broken circle-windows which adorn the peak of the Albany Street wall and the beautiful, hospitable doorway. Within, it is just a cafeteria; successive occupants had mutilated the interior beyond hope of restoration. As you pay your check, the cashier hands you a pamphlet containing Edgar Allan Poe's tribute to the cooking at the Planters; for he stayed there once when he happened to be in funds. "No fear of starving here," he writes. Poe had known what it was to be hungry, and would know again.

Except for Fraunces's Tavern, set down half a mile away in a hollow of the main range, these battered buildings plastered against the foundations of the sky-scrapers are all that remains of old down-town New York. Not one of them heard the guns of the British fleet; and of the older Dutch houses with their stepped roofs, their weather-vanes, their kitchen windmills, progress has left not even a foundation.

## *Chapter IV*

### LITTLE SYRIA

STILL wandering round the edge of the sky-scrapers!

This city knows how to advertise. Any other port in civilized lands grants you at your approach only vistas of near-by shipping, warehouses and wharves, of distant spires and domes, of houses straggling over hills. But New York, gateway to rich and daring America, flashes at once upon the foreign visitor the highest and most original group of buildings in the modern world. They are so unbelievably big and so lavishly suggestive of wealth and power, they make such spirited promise of a new civilization, that the stranger from Europe must think of them in retrospect before he can determine whether they are really beautiful or merely big and flamboyant.

As regards her inhabitants, New York plays the same spectacular trick. After her sky-scrapers and her wealth, her commonest title to fame lies in her foreign colonies. And beside the gateway to New York she has planted not sober Swedes nor matter-of-fact Germans nor any other race which the eye might confuse with the native stock, but one of the most alien and picturesque elements among her foster-children—the Syrians.

Viewed from Battery Park—as I have said before—the beginnings of Greenwich Street and Washington Street resemble the profile of a mountain valley. To the left towers like a red Alpine crag the Whitehall Building. To the right shoots up the main range. Washington Street is the valley between; and a venerable three-story building begins it. By virtue of a stepped roof, quarter-circle windows on the seaward side and leaded dormers, this building looks colonial. Old maps, however, prove that its site was water before the thirties of the last century. Beyond, run rows of square old-fashioned tenements, their fronts embellished with the futurist designs of fire-escapes. Two generations ago, before the era of sky-scrapers, the first Syrian families settled in these buildings. As is the way of foreign colonies, the later arrivals gathered under the wing of their more sophisticated countrymen. Seemingly no law of population governs such matters; it is solely chance. In the basement stores of the tenements, the pioneer merchants began to display their laces and Turkish water-pipes. Eventually Syrian wholesale and retail commerce in goods of the Near East absorbed four blocks along Washington Street together with the tributary alleys. The Syrian rank and file continued to crowd the tenements; but the pioneers, grown rich by now, have long ago moved to Brooklyn Heights—across the East River, but after all only two subway stations along the Interborough. There, they are building up an aristocratic Syrian quarter.

Two doors beyond the old building at the corner, the strangeness begins with a sign in Arabic. That fine, rich language which has conquered the southeastern fringe of

the Mediterranean is the native tongue for all our Syrians. Next comes a show-window which seems to strive like a dyer for new variations on colors and shades, the prevailing impression being red and saffron yellow. Windows like these blaze for four blocks along the street. They culminate in a pair of wholesale houses whose display suggests the court of the Grand Khan.

Along the streets rolls and babbles the cheerful, noisy, unconventional life of a tenement quarter. Children as fair as angels race and tumble with children whose dark curls remind you of ancient Assyrian statuary. But you cannot keep your eyes long away from those windows. Tins of olive-oil with gaudy labels in French and Arabic . . . water-pipes, their stems tasseled in scarlet and bright lemon . . . Prussian blue . . . golden-brown taborets inlaid with white woods like ivory . . . heaps of cream and purple egg-plant and russet pomegranates . . . big, flat cakes shaped like artists' palettes or like doughnuts seen in the distortion of a magic mirror, their surfaces dusted with fine seeds . . . appetizing piles of yellow, white, and pink nougat . . . rows of glass jars brimming with strange, big seeds—whether used for food or for medicament, I do not know . . . streamers and foamy piles of fine-meshed lace . . . buff earthen oil-jars in the classic form of a Greek amphora . . . Turkish vases, their enamel an intricate kaleidoscope. . . . Buddhas of glazed pottery or enameled metal in green, tawny-red and gold. The eye grows weary with color.

The lace business, which founded the prosperity of this colony, flourished mainly in old buildings up those



WASHINGTON STREET





cavernous streets running eastward to the elevated. In early spring, the complexion of these streets grows darker with the influx of the out-of-town buyers—Syrian and Armenian peddlers, gathering up the stock for their summer-time adventures at back doors. At any afternoon there come limousines and laudaus to discharge ladies, very correct as to hats and gloves and shoes, who regard the children rolling about the streets either with amused superiority or with the interest of an outsider Seeing Life. These are up-towners of course, adventurers of shopping. You imagine them displaying the purchases afterward—"in the *dearest* little foreign shop down by the Battery. I found it by pure accident!"

The typical Syrian is perhaps the darkest among our non-negroid aliens. He runs much to black hair, curly or wavy. The ill-favored among them wear always a kind of aggrieved or persecuted expression; the beautiful seem to have stepped out of holy pictures of Raphael or da Vinci. Over one of the fruit-stands presides a woman in her young maturity who more nearly resembles my idea of the Madonna than anything I ever saw on canvas. However, she has herself blurred the picture for me. One day I found her standing in the middle of the street pointing at a hole in a dish-pan and expressing herself in Arabic which she made squall like Chinese. Her target was a tin peddler; evidently he had sold her a defective pan. For the old-fashioned tin peddler, almost gone now from our rural districts, remains an institution of the Syrian quarter. Once or twice a week the one-horse wagon, with clanking festoons of pots and pans, kettles and cans, passes slowly down



Washington Street. Every time it stops, the tenement doors pour out a flood of housewives, excited over the prospect of bargains and bargaining.

As for the Syrian whom the Nordics of Washington Street call the Apostle, his conduct has not yet disappointed me. He is in the bloom of his thirties—the Apostle. His eyes are dark and deep and spiritual. His black hair and beard curl lightly at the tips and shade off into blond. His nose is pure Grecian, his brow as firm and regular as the pillars of Solomon's Temple. Nothing in the Metropolitan Museum looks more scriptural.

The Apostle serves as subeditor and reporter for the Syrian newspaper which, the editor tells me, has a big circulation on some days and a small one on others, according to how interesting it is! His leisure hours he devotes to altruism and philanthropy. The native Syrian children, he finds, are losing their Arabic. Now for a Syrian-American, destined by birth to a career in commerce with the Near East, Arabic is more than an accomplishment; it is a necessity. So every afternoon he tutors a class of little boys and girls in that classic dialect which he learned in his native Damascus.

The Syrian quarter we call it, because the people of the Bible land give it color and leadership. However, they are in a mere plurality here, not a majority. No district of Greater New York holds such a tangle of strange races. Sprinkled among their neighbors of Asia Minor dwell a few Turks. Ten years ago, one knew that on sight, for they all wore the fez. But the fez, like the Chinese pigtail, disappeared in the flames of the Great War. Now one dis-

tinguishes the Turks only by their eagle-like expression and by the yellow undertone in their complexions. They, and a small minority among the Syrians, are Mohammedans. Islam being a faith which stresses individual observance rather than ritual, they have no mosque. But any one who listens attentively enough on a Friday morning may hear as he strolls down Washington Street an oratorical flow of rhythmic speech piercing the rumble and chatter of the pavements. It is the reading of the Koran. The Syrians of this district are mainly Roman Catholics. They have two churches; the one near the corner of Morris Street, an interesting specimen of Byzantine architecture adapted to cheap materials.

The window-signs betray the presence of Greeks and Italians; in the saffron-blond complexions and high cheekbones of the children racing over the sidewalks, one scents the Slav. There are Lithuanians too, that strange race which makes claim to straight descent from the original Aryans. As a matter of fact, three economic strata of New York meet in this district. The Syrians and Turks, and to a lesser extent the Greeks, are international traders. The Italians and Greeks serve the sea. Most of the restaurants and retail stores bear the legend: "Boats supplied." The Czecho-Slovaks, Lithuanians, and South Slavs work as janitors, elevator men, and cleaners in the great sky-scrapers to the east; they are the back door of the business district. And all these elements except the Syrians have overflowed into the huddle of tenements and old houses about Pearl Street, on the other side of the sky-scrapers.

Indeed, in this eastern district dwells impermanently the

most picturesque element of all. Skirt the waterfront again, pass the Brooklyn ferry; and you come to a broad, double wharf where snub-nosed canal-boats, four deep, wallow in the oily harbor-swells. Even on first sight they look settled and domestic; there are lace curtains at the cabin windows and often potted plants. All the tiny quarter-decks have railed and canopied inclosures in which, on fine days, groups of little children toddle. Older children hop from deck to deck, pursued by frolicking, barking dogs. On Mondays, all decks fly the red, white, and blue of the family wash. These are the canal-boats on the Canadian run—if I may use the word “run” concerning anything so stolidly dignified as a canal-boat. All summer they ply the inland waterways between New York and Quebec carrying paper stock southward, manufactured goods northward. The skippers are mostly French-Canadians who, as an Irish wharfinger at this dock once remarked to me, are great marriers. They always take the family along; and they time their voyages so that when the early autumn frost locks the northern waterways they will be on the southern run to New York. At this dock they tie up for the winter. The tiny cabins afford squeezed quarters for a man, a wife, from two to six children, a cat, and a dog. However, in summer the family spends all its waking hours out of doors; and in winter there is the empty hold for purposes of domestic overflow. Board runways from boat to boat form streets for this impermanent village. The children are entered in a little public school on Pearl Street under the elevated. Mother catches up with her sewing. Father makes repairs. And so until spring, when the ice of the southern waterways breaks up

and the family resumes its unperilous voyaging. Such a life must be heaven for the children.

And to these nomads of the canals, New York presents one of its most majestic aspects. I have remarked how the sky-scrapers fall here and there into compositions as though some super-artist had designed them all for one group. Now, it is impossible for one who knows and loves mountains—as I profess to do—to see this man-made range without thinking now and then of the God-made Rockies or Sierras or Alps. The view to northward from this dock resembles in outline the famous Horseshoe of the Mosquito at the summit of the Colorado Rockies. The slender cone of Mount Sheridan, seen above a dip of the nearer range, dominates the Horseshoe. Just so, the sky-line breaks here to reveal the spire of the Woolworth Building. From no other point on Manhattan does it seem so much a vision. Sixty stories? Call it two hundred stories and one would believe even that. If it began to stretch upward and upward until it lost itself in the sky, I for one should feel no surprise.

All winter the French-Canadian skippers sit facing these symbols of wealth and power and far-reaching enterprise; the richest square mile on earth. Yet they touch not even the hem of its garment. Spiritually, I suppose it is as far away from them as though it were a pictured fantasy of Mars.

## *Chapter V*

### THE ROOT OF BROADWAY

SWEEPING his memory over the physical aspects of Manhattan, even in this century, the old resident feels that he is reviewing some outlandish dream. And the city seems to change its habits with its sky-line. Old customs, some derived from the very days of the patroons, have of late passed into the limbo of forgotten things. Even as recently as when I came to New York, the front stoop life survived; the very word "stoop" being an inheritance from the Dutch. But the three and four story houses—the ground floor half-basement, the parlor floor attained by a flight of iron-railed steps—have given way by hundreds of blocks to tall buildings and tenements. With their passing there vanished also the family reunions of the front stoops, the neighborly visiting, the open and unabashed love-making. Prohibition took the life out of the "New Year's bust," itself the direct heir of a Knickerbocker custom. The phonograph and the radio have all but exterminated the Italian organ-grinder; generally speaking, the dances of the "boys and girls together . . . on the sidewalks of New York" survive only in the song which Tammany appropriated for Al Smith. But three old local customs have struggled through the transition be-



tween brownstone fronts and steel structures: the two lamps maintained by the city at his Honor the Mayor's door, the great demonstration before the newspaper offices on election night, and the Thanksgiving day masquerade of the street boys and girls.

To replace the lost customs, our soil has given spontaneous birth in the past decade to the most thrilling and picturesque local observance of all, our frenetic and pandemoniac welcome to eminent foreign visitors and returned domestic heroes. So, in the decade following our declaration of war on Germany, we honored a king, a crown prince, two queens, a North Pole discoverer, two eminent savers of life at sea, two women swimmers of the English Channel, the heroes of the New York-to-Paris flights, several victorious generals and eminent statesmen. The route of glory is always the same. The distinguished visitor lands by tender at the Battery. If the reception committee gives him time for observation, he gets on his way up the harbor a startling glimpse of New York. Momentarily he is gazing straight along Broadway. It slashes the building-mass clean and sheer and narrow, suggesting infinite heights and mysteries. Man, you would say, had nothing to do with it; the hand of nature, working through eons, eroded this gorge. That disappears. Perhaps when the visitor looks up again the International Mercantile Marine Building fills his eye. It lies at the foot of sky-scrapers like a comely, low eminence at the foot of a range. With its Georgian arrangement of windows, its coats of arms of the world's great cities, it seems to me nearly the most cheerful and welcoming building in New York. The procession advances, wheels at the



Custom House; and here, if the visitor can take his eyes away from the crowds, Broadway bursts upon him again. He sees it from the middle of the street. This, by some mysterious law of vision, is the best view.

He is standing in the bowels of the gorge. That fairy-tale tower of the Standard Oil Building has lost itself now behind a long curve of massive stone; the glory is all to the left. Up springs there a cliff that rises higher and higher, as the eye turns northward, until it seems to absorb the distance. Sheer above hangs a recessed and pillared balcony, like the cave-cities in the cliffs of the Southwest. The sky-line lifts to the Singer Building. Just a banal picture-book for some views, here it presents its best aspect in a spike of red and a turret of bronze-green. The sky-line dips and then ends with the spike of the Woolworth, which here seems a thing feather-light, suspended in air. It closes the vista; for all the stranger knows, there are yet greater heights beyond.

The eminent visitor can perceive this, of course, only with stabs of the eye; he is doubtless too busy with the populace, wedged in from curb to pavement by the mounted police. It is the best dressed popular crowd in the world; by that sign as much as by the lavish size and spread of the buildings, he must read the wealth of that New World to which this is the gateway. If he has ears on his head, he must perceive, too, the differences between their cheering and that of a European crowd. I have heard Romans, Londoners, Parisians, Viennese, Berlinese holding celebration or welcoming heroes. Their collective voice as compared to that of New York is as the hum of a motor compared to the rush and roar and whistle of an express-train. The



THE DOWN-TOWN ELEVATED



slashed cañons of lower Broadway play curious tricks with sounds as with air currents. At some points the echoes seem to collide and burst into a noise like the booming of a great gun. Finally, on days of triumph like these, the air dances with a species of giant confetti appropriate to the gigantic buildings from which it emanates. At one of the early welcomes, some enthusiastic broker's clerk opened and hurled out of his high window a roll of ticker-tape. It made such a glorious effect that others, all along the line of Broadway, imitated him. Offices which had no ticker-tape threw out sheaves of loose paper. The gorge above Broadway is spotted with gigantic, glittering snowflakes, laced with white streamers that weave and intertwine as though moved by the invisible hands of the People of the Air. Of late, the police and the street-cleaning department have moved to abolish this custom; the constabulary consider it wasteful and dangerous, and the White Wings call it nasty. I hope they fail. And I notice that Lindbergh got even more office confetti than his predecessors on the Road of Triumph.

No one, I suppose, has time to inform the illustrious guest from foreign parts, as he sweeps into the babel of Broadway, that he is crossing most historic ground. They might tell him, indeed, if it were a battle-site. But although those two or three acres at the foot of Broadway have given as much as any tract of equal size to the making of America, once only have they known the clash of arms—a little perfunctory shelling by Lord Howe's fleet in 1776. It is a quiet tale, but none the less heroic; the sober epic of men who braved a thousand devils in a new world, and stuck it out.

Where the Custom House with its fine sculptured groups of the Continents faces Bowling Green, stood for nearly a century the Dutch fort. On Bowling Green—now shrunk to a handkerchief-size triangle of struggling grass—Peter Minuit, according to tradition, bought Manhattan of the Indians for twenty-four dollars in goods and chattels. This is only tradition; naturally, bargaining Indians would squat on an open space outside of the formidable stockade. Perhaps it did not happen at all. Perhaps Peter, being a hard-headed Dutch trader, affected to break off negotiations with the equally stubborn sachem, let him go, sent a messenger to overtake him at the leafy covert of Liberty Street, say, and tell him to come back for his twenty-four dollars. History held that Peter drove a hard bargain until some expert accountant calculated that if the chief had put out the money at compound interest, his heirs could buy all Manhattan to-day.

In that stockade, even before they fixed the last log, the Dutch set up the Church in the Fort, a congregation of the Dutch Reformed Church intact in New York even to this day. Early, it founded an ecclesiastical tradition. Never at any period has New York lacked one lamenting Jeremiah of a preacher to tell her that she is walking the primrose path to damnation. In the middle years of the seventeenth century the burghers of New Amsterdam imported a pastor from Holland. At about the same period that new luxury, chocolate, penetrated to the colony. Bread and chocolate parties, beginning at sunset of a winter night and lasting until nine or ten, became furiously fashionable. It is not recorded that the parson said anything against the con-

sumption of schnapps; no, to him chocolate was the dark beverage of hell. Those parties, he said, were turning his people into careless worldlings. The burghers listened; but the revelry went on. The preacher lost his charge only when he took to preaching in English, which was considered an affectation. But the line of Jeremiah descended straight from him to the Rev. John Roach Stratton.

This old Dutch site by the fort had more to do than most of us suspect with the spiritual making of New York. I have noticed that in our older American communities the spirit of the original settlers persists to an astonishing degree. In an age of violent religious and racial intolerance, this stockade and the settlement at its foot was a little oasis of tolerance. The fathers of these Dutch settlers had fought under William of Orange to establish the principle that the state may not concern itself with private beliefs. Before Peter Stuyvesant had grown old as governor, the spirit was tested and found genuine. Spain and Portugal began expelling or suppressing their Jews. A ship-load of Jews, driven from the Portuguese colony of Brazil, appeared off Manhattan and asked asylum. Peter Stuyvesant, after keeping them on the island for a few days while he formed his ponderous Dutch judgment, admitted them. With no restrictions as to residence or religious practices, they settled down into the community and founded the Jewish aristocracy of America. The Dutch might have been less tolerant of Roman Catholics had any applied; but that denial, with Spain still a terror of the white man's frontier, would have proceeded less from religious bigotry than from political fear. And when the Stuart kings took over,



the strong Catholic influence at court, felt even in this remote colony, tore down even that restriction. A tablet in the Custom House commemorates the first mass, celebrated on this spot in 1683. Quietly and without disturbance Catholicism rooted itself here, whereas in towns of Puritan origin our pioneer Catholics, even during the early nineteenth century, sustained mob violence. The Stuart governors established the Episcopalian Church, to this day New York's strongest Protestant denomination. But although the government was having its "short way with dissenters" in England, fear or tolerance kept them from suppressing or restricting either the Dutch Reformed Church or the Puritan faction, by now filtering into the island from New England.

The witchcraft craze had here only a light repercussion. In 1665 some fanatic complained that a man and woman had, by hellish formulæ learned of the devil, compassed the death of a child. Brought to trial, the woman was acquitted, the man held on suspicion. A year or so later, the authorities quietly released him. And behind the brief synopsis of evidence and pleadings which survives, I feel a community mind which had no sympathy with the proceeding.

The town has kept this tradition. It is the spiritual reason, I think, for our kaleidoscope of races, our Babel of tongues, our forty or more foreign colonies. The stranger has always found it easy to make his adjustment. You may say that the Dutch and the Stuarts did well or ill, according to whether you belong to the Sons of the Revolution or to the Sons of the Steerage. But the fact remains.

A tablet at the corner of the Mercantile Marine Building, Number One Broadway, informs you that a house on that site was headquarters for General Putnam and for the British army of occupation. In 1756 Captain Kennedy, British Navy, erected on this sea-sweeping acre one of the finest mansions in this thriving colonial capital. Surviving prints and photographs show that it had all the gracious amplitude, the sense of formal but spontaneous hospitality, peculiar to the best American colonial architecture. Here Washington called the council of war which decided to evacuate Manhattan; here Greene held conference with Putnam; here for seven years Howe and his lieutenants managed to rule without disturbances a sullen city of suppressed rebellion; here Major André started on that ride whose end was the gallows; here in later years dwelt the exiled Talleyrand. For after the Revolution the mansion became a hotel, then a boarding-school, and finally a boarding-house. But it kept its form and its air of decadent elegance until 1882, when the wreckers tore it down to make room for a building having the unprecedented altitude of twelve stories. The land was already grown too valuable to hold a mere historic object. Even then, Europeans at least had the art of moving old buildings piecemeal and setting them up on another site. Number One Broadway deserved preservation; but the eighties were the period of dense indifference to historic monuments. No one intervened to save it; no one, so far as our antiquarians can find, even thought to preserve the latches, the paneling, or the mantels on which Washington must have laid his hand.

## *Chapter VI*

### WALL STREET

To most of the pavements which bottom lower Broadway and its subsidiary cañons, the sunlight cannot penetrate. Yet in bright weather the depths at the foot of the gigantic buildings never seem dim or murky. The sunbeams, leaping back and forth from a thousand windows far above, give to the shadows at the street-level a faint luminosity. In that light the human figures flowing ceaselessly north and south in a double stream seem to stand forth more clearly outlined than in full sunlight; it is almost as though the air were faintly charged with phosphorus, which spreads about them the very wraith of an aura. A strange thing to say of that district which more than any other in this world stands symbol for things material, but sometimes in this light the crowds seem unreal. They might be the Outward Bound, dead and unaware.

Another anomaly: mid-morning or mid-afternoon, the crowds of lower Broadway do not—as all Europeans and outlanders believe—walk at a brisk rush. The tempo, it seems to me, is even slower than that of the commercial streets in London or Paris, far slower than that of the shopping district in upper Fifth Avenue. Not that the pedes-

trians loiter. The step is as firm and determined as that of infantry on the march. Final peculiarity; the strange silence of it all. When I first noticed this—as a man will notice suddenly an obvious phenomenon he has been ignoring for years—I wondered if it were not a trick of acoustics; perhaps these depths absorbed sound. Then a pair of truckmen, unloading a safe, laughed; and the noise came out as clearly as the crying of a child in church. The cause may be that half-light; it takes full light, whether of sun or fire, to draw conversation out of people; or it may be the absorption of brain-workers. This is only the overflow of nearly a million people who cram for seven hours a day the caves in the great cliffs aloft; and ninety-nine per cent of them work furiously at a thinking job.

Nearly a million; nowhere on the surface of the globe do so many people congregate as on these lower acres of Manhattan. It has become a city of itself, lacking nothing which man demands of life except only lodging and formal amusements. One could dress like a Paris mannequin or a Beau Brummel from the smart specialty shops which flash invitation at you in the tiled subway basements. These exist mostly to tempt the commuters, but all Broadway and Wall Street purchase from them in emergency. Along the street level flourish hundreds and perhaps thousands of restaurants. And these are not always of the quick-lunch variety. I know one tucked into a byway of lower Broadway which serves French fare with all the ceremony and leisure of Paris. Only wine, which gives the key-note to all French cookery, is lacking. May I not say alas?

Along the streets at the back doors of the sky-scrapers,

there are Mexican, pure Spanish and Italian establishments. A half block further, and one may lunch on the strange pastes and syrupy coffee of the Syrians and the Turks. These, however, are the resorts of the middle class in this City of Big Business, as the white-tiled cafeterias are the inns of the proletariat. The upper class generally takes luncheon elsewhere. Scarcely one of the great buildings but houses on its top floors a club bearing the name of some business or profession. Real clubs they are too, even though most of them close at six o'clock. They have their lounges and reading-rooms, their arrays of paintings by famous modern masters and their private apartments for special functions, their broad dining-rooms served by French chefs. One, atop a high sky-scraper, opens out on to a roof terrace whose view looks down like that of an *aéroplane* upon the ribbons that are the sidewalks, the dizzy chasms that are the streets, the misty, busy sweep of water and shore which is the eastern harbor. I attended in a private room of this club an intimate luncheon to an Englishman important in many branches of human endeavor. The company—mostly eminent—was of both sexes. With the soup, they plunged into a tourney of conversation so brilliant and so well sustained that when the waiters showed signs of impatience we adjourned to the terrace. There, all the rest of a warm autumn afternoon, we looked down at the world as from the heavens and speculated on its future when we were gone. More and more do these private dining-rooms of the down-town clubs entertain such companies as these; it is growing to be a fashion in the richer intellectual circles of the metropolis.







BROAD STREET

W. H. Saunders

Finally, the highest circle of all—the Big Bankers, the Captains of Industry—have of late years begun to establish auxiliary living quarters in their proud office suites. The very rich tend nowadays to give up New York as a main seat of residence and shift to the country. No more do they maintain town mansions, but only apartments. Nothing is more convenient than a suite attached to the office, where, in the “country season,” one may dress for dinner or under pressure pass the night. Some go further than this; they have added private dining-rooms of their very own. One of the most important American financiers has many interests outside of business; the list of his boards and committees, artistic, philanthropic and political, would fill a page of “Who’s Who.” He manages it all by insisting that the committees must meet with him at luncheon in the private dining-room annexed to his office. He enters, sharp on the hour of one, and a butler begins immediate service of a simple luncheon. I do not know whether this meal is the work of his own chef, or comes from the club on the next floor. At any rate, it is a creation. Sharp at a quarter past two, the host rises, makes his excuses, and the committee remains to finish off the tag-end of the business. This is one of the devices by which men of his type manage three or four parallel careers.

Since I began rightly to understand this cliff city, I look upon every casual visit to an unknown office as an adventure. There they stand, window after window up a thrust of thirty or forty stories, just alike. The elevator doors, opening to discharge passengers, reveal only white corridors and uniform doors of mahogany or oak or green-painted steel. As Gertrude Stein, futurist poet, says in her masterpiece on

the Bon Marché, "One, one, there are many of them. Each is like the other." Within, you feel, must be the same neat, sanitary uniformity—steel or near-mahogany desks and chairs of the latest fashion in office furniture; rows of scrubbed clerks and well powdered stenographers, all cut from the same pattern. Sometimes that is exactly what you find, and sometimes—I had occasion of late to interview the important president of a most important corporation. When I stepped through his impersonal mahogany door, I did not look at him, although he was waiting for me at his desk, but at his surroundings. In the spaces between windows stood glass cabinets holding ship models which compared to any others I have ever seen, as Venetian glass to Delft china. For these were all made of bone and ivory; every plank, every smallest spar, a distinct piece. The blocks of the rigging, which looked perfect to the naked eye, were no bigger than sections from a grain of rice. The president before settling down to business showed me the collection, lingering with special fondness over an eighteen-inch ship of the line made by a French prisoner in the Napoleonic wars. I have heard since that this is the finest specimen of its kind in the world. "I hope you don't think it's an affectation, my having them here," said the president. "I like them about me; and I spend more of my waking hours here than anywhere else. And they rest me!" Again, I stepped into a broker's office. There stood the board with the busy marker at work, facing the regular crowd of intent amateur speculators. But they sat in antique, nine-slat Windsor chairs. For this office houses an extraordinary private collection of early-American pine and maple furniture—hutch, butterfly,

and crane-bracket tables, Carver chairs, dower chests, tavern signs, very early prints. I hear on the authority of a great art critic that there stands, carefully guarded, in a private Broadway office, one of the five or six greatest of all Greek torsos. The world of art knows it not; it has passed since its discovery on some Greek island from hand to hand among collectors with a mania for secret and exclusive possession. Some day it will land in a museum, the eventual destiny of all artistic treasures which survive the accidents of time. And when that happens, it will be as though some antiquarian had dug up another Bathing Venus from the soil of Cyrene.

A world of surprises, this towering fantasy at the foot of Manhattan. In fact, no man lives who knows all there is to be known of that district which we lump under the term "Wall Street." The Street itself stands partly responsible for that. In the financial business, discreet silence is the law of success. No young man begins to rise in Wall Street until he has proved to his superiors that he can keep his mouth shut. And they who fringe the district where big money is the staple merchandise—lawyers, promoters, company presidents—have caught the habit. Wall Street men, I think sometimes, even love to make a game of mystery, like boys. Interlacing this district, runs more than one telephone system which no ingenuity of man can connect with the public wires. There are even secret passages by which certain most important lords of finance may make exit to their limousines at some obscure door at back of the block.

While making repairs in a down-town office, an acquaintance with Bolshevik tendencies discovered one of these



hidden corridors. "It's their getaway when the social revolution breaks," he said. The true explanation is less melodramatic. If one of the leading men of Wall Street should throw open for even a day the door to his private office, half of New York would be upon him, selling things. Kings of nations have armies and police forces to hold off the eager populace, kings of finance only their corps of private secretaries and their own good wits.

Wall Street proper, as it breaks out of Broadway, reminds me of a conservative small-town banker in a rusty frock-coat among the smart suitings of a Rotary Club luncheon. He knows and they know that he could buy the whole lot; what is the necessity for dressing the part? Narrow, insignificant, the buildings of moderate height and mostly of nondescript transition-period architecture, only its magic name on the lamp-post signals it to the tourist. The sub-treasury alone, an antique marble building in the best American classic manner, gives it distinction. Every New York child must go to see that historic spot at least once in his schooling, and learn what happened there—the punishments of the pillar and whipping-post; the acquittal of Zenger, which won so great a battle for liberty of the press; the meeting of the first Continental Congress after the Revolution; the inauguration of Washington. Ward's heroic-size figure of Washington at the head of the steps has more life than most of the statuary of the stiff period in which he wrought. The bronze tablet of Washington at prayer is perhaps the most atrocious violation of taste in all New York. And spattered over the pillars and the front steps are the scars of the latest and most tragic episode in its

history. There, in 1923, a cart loaded with dynamite exploded. If it was a militant anarchist job—as seems most likely—the criminal probably intended his blast for the modest building of J. Pierpont Morgan & Co. across the street. It turned the morning Wall Street crowd into a shambles; it blew men from their desks half a block away. And to render the villainy complete, it failed to make a dent on that tablet!

Where Wall Street breaks out of Broadway, stands Trinity Church, in every figurative sense center of the downtown district. Elsewhere, the beating humanity of its strange parish lies muffled by walls of granite or concrete or custom. But Trinity wears its heart on the outside of its nut-brown vesture; and it deserves a chapter by itself.



## *Chapter VII*

### TRINITY CHURCHYARD

TRINITY CHURCHYARD lies at the bottom of a dizzy gorge. I had office room once on the twenty-second story of a skyscraper at its edge; and all day long pigeons were dropping like plummets past my window to light on the cross, far below. Nowhere in New York—which means nowhere in the world—do walls seem to rise so high and sheer and unmitigated as to south and north and east. Even the segment of sky to west will soon disappear, blocked out of the picture by steel and cement. Direct sunlight reaches Trinity and its graves only for a few hours in the late afternoon; and then it touches merely the northern border, where a row of shrubs and bushes, surrounding the Martyrs' Monument, still manages to resist gas and vibrations.

When in the thirties of the last century the parish built on this historic site by far the tallest and most pretentious structure of Manhattan Island, skippers beating up the Sound or the Hudson set their course by its serrated spire. Surrounded only by its ancient graves, by stately trees of which a few rotting stumps now remain, and by rows of affluent houses, it stood bathed in sunlight, which must have revealed its defects. It is Gothic in style; and the stiff, ruled

art of the early-Victorian period had no right to trifle with Gothic. Nearly three quarters of a century was to pass before modern architects rediscovered that secret of subtle irregularity possessed by the medieval French builders.

"*Ersatz Gothic!*" exclaimed a British captain with artistic tastes as he led his company up to Cologne Cathedral after the war. So Trinity must have seemed when it was new and sun-bathed—substitute Gothic. But to-day it lies always in the deep though luminous shadows thrown by the many-windowed towers above; and age has burned rose and gold and ashen into its brown stone. Shadow and ripe color supply what the builders could not give. Trinity has now its sense of mystery and of whimsical irregularity; time and change have made it at last really Gothic.

In another way time and change have worked on the destiny and purposes of this most famous among American churches. Once it was the parish of the aristocracy; to read its rolls, one would call it that still. Then the aristocratic quarter moved to Second Avenue, to Washington Square, to lower Fifth Avenue, to upper Fifth Avenue, to Park Avenue. Yet still the old families take pride in maintaining a Trinity pew. However, it is many years since any of them pretended to attend church here except on special occasions like Easter. But for the fabulous wealth of the parish, the historic importance of the site, it would have passed twenty-five years ago. Then, as the region about Wall Street and Broadway became in the daytime the most thickly inhabited square mile on earth, Trinity found in its daily services a new mission of healing souls, a spiritual reason for being. There are at least three services every day—early morn-

ing, noon, and late afternoon. Always, they draw reasonably large congregations. In Lent, they crowd the church to its doors. The same thing is true of Trinity's first daughter-church, old St. Paul's, six blocks to the north. And St. Peter's, in Barclay Street, oldest Roman Catholic church of New York, seems to have a full noon-time congregation on every week-day of the year. London is wondering how to save the inimitable churches with which Sir Christopher Wren sprinkled the city after the Great Fire. They too have lost their parishioners; and their sites have grown enormously valuable. A dozen of them must go in the next few years. But for stately Trinity, venerable St. Paul's, and warm, ample old St. Peter's, the future seems secure.

Following the same policy, Trinity Churchyard, the only real breathing-place in the center of the down-town district, has become by benevolence of the vestry and disposition of the public virtually a park. The Wall Street clerks, and especially the girl stenographers, have appropriated it for their own. I have mentioned that customary silence of the crowds in Wall Street and lower Broadway. But ten minutes after the mellow chime of Trinity sounds noon, the pillared doorways along Broadway and Wall Street begin discharging girls, not yet too tired for laughter and chatter; the luminous shadows sparkle with it. And in the heated season the stenographers, after a hasty luncheon at a cafeteria, drift by habit into the graveyard of Trinity. For here is shade, and without that choking congestion of hot, humid air which makes unendurable the narrow streets. Moreover, by some benevolent whim of air currents, every puff of breeze seems to come intensified into this deep chasm of the city masses.

From half-past twelve to half-past one, alert but wilted youth fills all the benches along the pathways, leans upon the buttresses, even squats in rows against the walls. Signs beseech these tired wayfarers to respect the tombs. However, in the choking heat of midsummer the vergers and attendants of Trinity seem to let this rule go by the board. Rightly so; they who died in the Lord, it seems to me, would not refuse to share the repose of their last resting-places with these heat-oppressed boys and girls. There is much talk, mannerly and subdued in deference to the place; even a thin undertone of laughter. Half of the girls use these moments to snatch a little reading from library books or popular magazines. Always one can count dozens of lovers, betraying the state of their affections by covert touches or the language of the eye. Even in midwinter, the benches hold scattered groups of girls, befurred and heavily gloved, keeping up the habit in defiance of blizzard weather.

At the Revolution, the Episcopal Church was the repository of the state religion of the New York colony. Had the new régime maintained the custom of an established church, the graveyard of this dominant parish might have become our Panthéon or Westminster Abbey. As it is, in Robert Fulton, Alexander Hamilton, William Alexander, Earl of Stirling, Captain James Lawrence of the *Chesapeake* ("Don't give up the ship"), John Clark, John Slidell, Albert Gallatin, it has a nucleus which, under other interpretations of the relation of church to state, might have gathered into itself Roosevelt and Cleveland and Irving and Putnam and Morse. The important dead rest in the smaller division to the south of the church. In the larger and north-

ern area lie mostly plain citizens of colonial New York whose names, save for the accidental preservation of this churchyard, were writ in water. I notice that the stenographers at noontime always gravitate to this side; perhaps they feel unconsciously more at home with these plain people than with the great and frigid dead.

At that, the names are gone now from many of the stones; time has split the surface away. Others still show the crude, irregular lettering of the seventeenth century, the precise carving of the eighteenth. Most of all I like the epitaph of Sidney Breese. "June 9, 1767," it reads, "Made by himself—ha, Sidney, Sidney, lyeest thou here—I here hye—till time is flown—to its extremity." There is a touch of defiant and eccentric individuality about this. Sidney Breese must have been a person; perhaps Samuel Breese Morse, inventor of the telegraph, drew his originality from this, his ancestor. The epitaph to Ann Hall who died in 1729 at the age of two is a bit of tender doggerel:

Sleep, lovely babe,  
And take thy rest.  
God called thee hence  
Because he thought best.

Let us after leaving Trinity make one or two side excursions in order to finish with the relics of colonial days in down-town New York. St. Paul's, still a chapel of the more important congregation, stands beside the bulk of the Woolworth Building like a rowboat alongside a liner. Otherwise it needs no apologies. Unlike Trinity, this oldest church building in New York is all of the soil—that Georgian



architecture which we copied from the English and gave somehow a severity and yet a warmth all our own. Beside the cheerful white and gold pillars of its interior stand the pews where Clinton and Washington worshipped when the one was governor of New York and the other president of the United States. It preserves also its fringe of churchyard, commemorating dead who were celebrities of the colony in their time, and are now forgotten except by historians and antiquarians. Montgomery, killed at the taking of Quebec, is the eminent exception. The accidents of excavation and grading have left this site raised above the surrounding streets. It seems a little bleak, therefore; it lacks the warmth and humanity with which the accidents of light and building have infused Trinity Churchyard; and I notice that the stenographers do not resort to St. Paul's at noon-time as they do to Trinity.

Turn back now; walk to Wall Street and into the fine, ample curve of Broad Street. After two or three blocks, the massive marbled towers of that rich thoroughfare give way to lower and older structures whose tenants have business with the sea. Among them stands a building whose mural tablets are not needed to proclaim its venerability and importance. It is Fraunces's Tavern, built in 1719 and fashionable clear into the nineteenth century. Two fortunate accidents have preserved it for our times. The blocks surrounding it were for a century a back-wash of progress where no one ever took the trouble to rebuild; and here after the Revolution occurred the disbanding of the general staff which fought the eight years' war—the occasion when Washington, most severe and self-controlled of our national



heroes, softened for a moment to show the fires burning under his serene surface. It was restored in 1907; a period when we were just beginning really to understand and appreciate our colonial architecture. Outside, it seems to this layman, the restorers did a commendable job. Inside—I wonder if they did not simplify things too much? Certainly the interior as it stands lacks the quaint irregularities, the individual inconsistencies, which are the charm of such American colonial inns as exist in their primitive form. I do not believe the golden-oak paneling of the ground-floor dining-room good. And with fine reproductions of colonial chairs, tables, and cabinets flooding the market, I see no excuse for the early Grand Rapids furniture. This is carping perhaps. No American with any sentiment for the beginnings of the republic should fail to see the collection of documents and portraits. But as a connoisseur of colonial inns—two are owned in my family—I say that the interior of Fraunces's needs re-restoration.

Jog north for two or three blocks through a tangle of narrow old streets, and stop at Hanover Square. Why this antique common of the early city always draws me on my walks, I cannot exactly say. It is in a nondescript district now; to the east old, low buildings, a coating of cement holding together their crumbling bricks; to the west the upthrust of the new, tall Cotton Exchange; curving through the background, the rattling elevated has lifted as though on an aerial tidal wave, its green cottage stations. Hanover Square stands apart from the main lines of pedestrian traffic; except for the hours when the offices are filling or emptying, it seems almost deserted. Therein lies part of its

charm. The rest perhaps proceeds from India House, substantial and not unbeautiful structure of the earlier nineteenth century. Its four stories seem by their very respectability to face down and dominate the upstart towers across the way. India House is the home of a club; its members shipping men and importers, rulers of the business of the sea. Around its tables I have heard, they talk more of Shanghai and Antwerp and London and Colon than of New York. Its interests girdle the globe. Scattered through its restaurants and lounge-rooms is a collection of ships' models and ship paintings begun before such antiques became a craze, and now unexcelled even in New York.

Drop your eyes to the pavement, round the corner of India House into Stone Street, and walk fifty paces or so. You are near the corner of Mill Lane, shortest street but one in New York. Raise your eyes just to the street level—do not look upward or you ruin the illusion—and, behold—London! Square after square in the City district of the British metropolis looks exactly like that—window-frames, doorways, first-floor walls painted in dark green; windows with small panes and heavy sashes; doorways level with the sidewalks or opening, down short flights of steps, to ground floors still lower. The Reform Club, which occupies one whole side of Mill Lane, might have been transported in sections from Old Jewry. Across the lane a low and graceful Renaissance building with enormous windows and a fine balcony seems to jerk you back to Manhattan. But only for an instant. You inspect its conservative, respectable brass sign and are again in the London of Dickens.

It is the establishment of Chubb & Son!

## *Chapter VIII*

### THE SETTING OF CITY HALL

THERE is a unity about down-town New York. Just as the "City" of London has a definite boundary separating it from the larger London, so almost to an inch you can draw the northern boundary of our City. It ends at busy Chambers Street, back of City Hall Park. For the next mile or so, that gigantic cordillera which is Broadway dips to foothills and lower eminences, and the massed buildings and busy streets have a confused, heterogeneous aspect as of a town which has not yet made up its mind what it is going to be.

And quite by accident, one of the most distinguished buildings in America borders our City on its landward side. Old City Hall—I first fell in love with it when, a homesick cub from the West, I used to watch it by night from the windows of the old "Sun" across the square. It has drawn me ever since. Whenever I have ten minutes of leisure in down-town New York, I find that my feet are carrying me, unconsciously and subconsciously, toward its park. And each year I have grown more and more its faithful admirer.

In England they speak slightly of the Georgian interpretation of Renaissance architecture. And in England

perhaps they were right. Its best existing examples have nothing much to commend them except a quality of Tory solidity. But our colonial builders, taking over the style, infused it with humanity. And though this building was not designed until 1802 nor completed until 1811, it represents the best colonial manner. There is an eighteenth-century house at Hanover, Massachusetts, which our family call the Lady House because its dignity and lightness and comely formality remind us of a grande dame of Clinton's circle or Washington's suite. This building is more solid and masculine. It suggests a gentleman of that day; exquisite in dress and appointments, a trifle formal in manner, sterling and reliable in character, and yet both human and humorous in mind.

Reflecting on its history, one realizes that Manhattan has been lucky to preserve it. Behind it—and a good background as it happens—stands the marble County Court House, a building of whose architecture nothing need be said either of approval or disapproval. This is a monument to Tweed Ring graft. It cost more, even at the low prices of the early seventies, than most modern sky-scrapers. Every brick and stone represents a thousand dollars of stolen money. This job accomplished—so I have heard—the Tweed Ring proposed to go on with a new City Hall. The muck-raking of the old "Times" and Nast's cartoons ruined Tweed and smashed this bit of deviltry. Then, in the iconoclastic seventies and eighties when so much of the fine older America was swept up like dead leaves, came into power a succession of mayors endowed with taste and feeling for the past. They held the building secure until the revival of

interest in the colonial began during the nineties. Finally it has been happy in its restoration and preservation. It stands now a perfect thing inside and out; if it escapes the accidents of fire, earthquake, and the common enemy, it may stand for a thousand years. Except for the rear—built plainly and of cheap materials, “because no one would ever see that side”—City Hall is beautiful from any point of view. Maneuver yourself to a standpoint on the southeastern corner of the park, and in one glance of the eye you embrace not only this most distinguished building in old Manhattan, but also the Woolworth Building, most startling—some would say most beautiful—in the new. Only a century apart in absolute time, they seem eons apart in spirit. . . .

Around the Hall lies the park proper, maintaining in spite of subway vibrations a few flourishing trees. Fringing that is an area of indeterminate and indescribable shape, formed from the fag-end of the many streets which spread like an untidy spider-web from this opening, and the tiny triangle known from its associations as City Hall Square. Along the western boundary runs one side of Broadway. The buildings here are scrambled nondescripts of the late nineteenth century. Southward stands the old Post-office, now a branch serving the down-town districts; a grey compilation of unnecessary pillars. To west are those early skyscrapers, the former Tribune Building and the World Building. Once, even in the memory of New Yorkers not yet middle-aged, that gilded dome of the World dominated the sky-line of Manhattan. Now it is buried twenty stories deep.

Just beyond the World, at the northeast corner of these





ST. PAUL'S





two bubbling acres, runs a fantastic structure of steel pillars and uplifted sheds. This is the most important plexus in the transportation system of Greater New York. At the east of this futuristic tangle gapes the dark entrance to the Brooklyn Bridge. At the north rise the busiest stations of two elevated lines. The kiosks scattered without seeming plan over the surrounding area are mouths to the subway system. And when at five o'clock the down-town offices begin to close, City Hall Park and its fringes, always brisk and lively, become suddenly dynamic. From a dozen city cañons floods of humanity pour into the square, widen out, concentrate again into torrents that cataract into the kiosks, the elevated stairways, the dark chasm of the bridge approach. In the narrower thoroughfares to southward, such as Nassau Street, the police have stopped all wheeled traffic. The crowd, banked solidly, takes possession of the street from wall to wall. On Park Row and Broadway the surface-cars, running bow to stern, clang furious demand for passage across these human streams. An aviator who once saw this hour on City Hall Park from low in the air says that it resembled a migration of army-ants—black and white, with multicolored spots. As a newcomer in New York, still homesick for the easier and more individual life of the Pacific Coast, this vomiting forth of our man-made mountains used to depress me almost beyond endurance. It was like an illustration from one of Wells's mordant fairy-tales. But beyond that it seemed so irresistibly impersonal; one man just a drop in the torrent, indistinguishable from any other drop! When I began to like it for its power, its humors, its chatter of girl voices, its cheer-

ful shuffle of a million feet, its sense of a day's job done and the play hour coming, I knew that I had grown acclimated to New York.

But while this is the hour of hours to see City Hall Park, at all times the district radiates for me an air of brisk good humor. Perhaps I am a poor judge; for me as for every New York journalist of twenty years ago there hangs over Park Row, northern Nassau Street, and their environs the shadow of what they were. My own memories center about the spot where nowadays a formless three-story "taxpayer" stands embraced by the enlarged Tribune Building. There, until about the period of the Great War, smiled a fine, sturdy old brick building of the post-colonial period. Once the proud home of Tammany Hall, it became in its old age the office of Dana's "Sun." The "Morning Sun," Dana's special creation, has vanished utterly, even to the name. A merry, cantankerous grig of a newspaper, "it seemed," as one of its kindly critics said, "to be published by a lot of college boys for their own diversion." Writing, and not news value or ultimate wisdom, was the criterion of the "Sun." Julian Ralph, Richard Harding Davis, Jesse Lynch Williams, Samuel Hopkins Adams, Stephen French Whitman, David Graham Philipps, Irvin Cobb, Frank Ward O'Malley—to name only a few bright stars—first learned that they could write because Boss Clark or Boss Lord or Boss Tommy Duade gave them their head. However, the delighted readers of such a journal form after all a small class; the rising costs of newspaper production were bound to swamp it in the end. To the "Sun" alumnus, the spot where Dana settled down to harry the frauds of the world

seems always the heart of the old newspaper district. Just to the north, during the lively days of the nineties, stood Pulitzer's "World" in its fine new building; and a block or so to the east, under the shadows of the elevated, Hearst his rival in inventing yellow journalism shot forth the "American" and Journal." To the south on Nassau Street, the "Tribune" backed up with an air of settled respectability the statue of its great founder Horace Greeley. The "Times," ensconced in an old building on Park Row, was talking already of moving north to a home consonant with its dignity. In the upper floors of a tall building just round the corner the "Press," now only a name, maintained a variegated editorial staff. Less than five minutes' walk away stood the unattached evening newspapers, then unconsidered factors in the general scheme of journalism.

It was a curious and rather wild transition period in New York journalism. The "yellows," progenitors of the milder modern tabloids, were finding themselves. Men actually went insane over the make-up stone with inventing new tricks in head-lines. Brisbane had just invented the device, very startling when first put forth, of printing his emphatic words in capitals. For the yellows and all the rest, the superstition that a news beat was the highest end of journalism still prevailed. The Gallagher stories of Davis, "The Stolen Story" of Williams, must seem to the modern city room strangely archaic. But they are absolutely true to the atmosphere of those lively days. The star reporter was the giddy prima donna of journalism, to newspapers what the aviator is now to armies. Does the young reader to-day even know what a star reporter was? I suppose not.

The personnel was also in transition. Horace Greeley had said frequently and profanely that he wouldn't have a college graduate in his basement. But the young gentlemen with sheepskins were crowding in nevertheless. And a part of the profession still adhered to the opinion—itsself an inheritance of the amorphic seventies, when most editors had graduated from the printer's case—that a newspaper writer like the moon was most brilliant when half full. Those old tales of pre-bootleg days in Park Row! There was the reporter, since become famous, who was sent in good order on an assignment at one o'clock and was next heard from when the police reserves clanged past the office at six. At that moment he was standing in the foot-path of the Brooklyn Bridge, waving a two-by-four scantling and proclaiming to all and sundry that he was Horatius at the bridge and that any one who lived in Brooklyn was a pup. . . . The special writer and the famous cartoonist who came down Park Row at three o'clock A.M. in Indian file. The writer was striking the cartoonist over the back with his cane, and the cartoonist was crying: "You can beat dis po' ole body if you wish, Marse Legree, but ma soul belongs to Joseph Pulitzer!" . . . The brilliant editorial writer who rode all night on the lines of the Brooklyn elevated demanding to be put off at Baffin's Bay. . . . The eminent editorial writer and the renowned executive who disappeared from the office on the same day. Two weeks later, the Boss wanted them. They were reported A.W.O.L. The Boss called in a reporter. "Smith," he said, "there's a Dutch liner sailing for Antwerp to-morrow. Take it. At Antwerp go to the Hôtel des Lys and bring those boys







BUILDING A SKY-SCRAPER

back." At the Hôtel des Lys, the reporter found his men with a bottle of champagne between them. "Boys, the Boss wants you," he said. "All right—let's go!" they responded. They had not communicated with the Boss; but he knew of old experience that with these two the terminus of a proper "jag"—so we called it then—was always the Hôtel des Lys, Antwerp, and no other spot on the globe. I would wrong the journalism of a quarter-century ago if I called these instances typical. But they happened!

And the "newspaper hang-outs" of those days! Katie's, back in the shabby huddle of William Street, served most excellent German cooking sauced with the wit of the proprietress; dinner at Katie's was always a symposium. Andy Horn's—bar and lunch—lay tucked darkly under the bridge approaches. Here journalism blended with the people of the older and more picturesque Bowery. The bartender was a warm admirer of Richard Le Gallienne, and if encouraged would quote you his friend's verse or show you autographed first editions. The old Astor House, long the leading hotel of New York and good to its last day, stood just opposite the present Woolworth Building. Its plain, old-fashioned American cuisine was never excelled in New York; nowhere outside of New England could one get such clam chowders. Here, to the end of its days, came for luncheon much of the power and intelligence of the Wall Street region. Progress wiped it out in April, 1906. As mightily well I remember. San Francisco was burning. I was working eighteen hours a day patching together insanely fragmentary despatches into a running story. And at three o'clock of one morning, too tired for the long journey home by elevated, I

went over to the Astor House for a bed. As I came into the lobby, I seemed to have stepped back a half-century. Crinolines—hair falling over a shoulder in love-curls—ruffled dress-shirts surmounted by stocks—the rhythm of an old-fashioned waltz. It was only the fancy-dress ball by which the habitual patrons of the Astor House were celebrating its finish as a hotel. But in my abnormal state of weariness and anxiety, I thought that I was seeing visions! Lipton's bar and lunch traversed the gorge between Nassau Street and Park Row. There we snatched breakfast before going out on assignment and traded with our kind the gossip of the day. Perry's drug store moved round a bit before settling down in the World Building. It had one little room sacred solely to refreshment. At times I have heard the roars of laughter from Perry's pierce even the shuffle and chatter of the home-going crowds. It was only the response to Irvin Cobb or Jim Dever or Lindsay Denison, spinning yarns. . . .

It all passed, with the era of journalism which it represented. The newspapers, one by one, took their mere physical presence away to regions where distribution would be easier. Only the "World" lingers, sole remaining symbol of those nights when City Hall Park was streaked with alert-eyed young men, hurrying back from their evening assignments.

## *Chapter IX*

### THE MAGIC BRIDGE

THE Roeblings, father and son, designed and built the Brooklyn Bridge between 1869 and 1883. At precisely that period the arts were dead or sleeping; pretentious and over-elaborate atrocities ruled architecture and interior decoration. Had they taken merely the looks of the thing into account, probably we should have had a mess of stone ornaments in variegated colors and inharmonious shapes. However, the Roeblings were professedly not architects but engineers, doing a job without precedent. How the thing would work—that was their main concern. So they built, as first consideration, soundly; and sound building is beautiful building. Except for those little devices by which a good workman hides the rough joints, they seemed not to have considered the appearance of their masterpiece. There must be approaches, to lift the span up in the air and clear the tall masts on the river below. The Roeblings lifted them over a series of arches finished off—just by way of hiding the joints—with big cushions of smoothed stone. At the point where the span rises and flies across the river, there must be towers, with double arches to admit traffic. Doubtless because that form best suited their engineering plan the Roeblings, designed the arches in Gothic. The towers

they finished at the top in plain, heavy stone. That is all; not an inch of carving; not a single concession to ornamentation. When it stood complete the public shrieked and babbled about this mighty engineering feat—the longest suspension bridge in the world—the climax of bridge engineering—at last the link between New York and Brooklyn—the promise of a greater New York. About its beauty, people said very little. It was just as well to keep quiet about that. The new bridge hadn't a single Ghibelline battlement, a single inset of red brick and white marble, a single panel with decoration of gilded cattails. . . .

But better educated eyes see clearly what the Roeblings did. In the decades of cheap sophistication, they built simply with a view to sound construction, and so recaptured the shy spirit of the primitive. It remains the finest American architectural monument of their age. You need not search for a favorable point from which to behold the Brooklyn Bridge. Seen at any angle, it is comely, suggestive, (breath-taking, satisfying. However, I for one prefer those glimpses from the dock region of the lower East Side, where the western tower hangs like a vision above the low roofs and docks of Cherry Hill; where the elevated trains, coursing over the runway, move through air with the swoop of a bird in flight, and lose themselves in the gray and violet mists of the Brooklyn shore.

Before we cross the bridge, however, let us ramble a little about the southern edge of the approaches. You pass the World Building and plunge down what is for New York a respectable hill. To the left run the arches, growing higher and higher as the hill falls and the bridge rises to its



take-off. These arches have been walled with brick to make storehouses—mostly for hides. During more than a century, the hide and leather business has centered about Cherry Hill. If you can forget the spindling steel pillars supporting the outer runways of the bridge, these odd cave-shops have a Roman sturdiness, a very simple beauty of proportionate building grown ripe with use. They much resemble, indeed, the dwellings of the Theater of Marcellus in Rome over which the New York tourist raves, in ignorance that we have almost a replica at home. Then, as the arches stop and the tower with its two Gothic openings looms above, there opens to right an irregular square filled now to the cornices with the quadruple track of the Second and Third Avenue elevated lines and roaring with the passage of heavy trucks. Stop here, and inspect the brownish-red, slightly dilapidated building to the right. It seems merely a storehouse now; but from the days just after the War of 1812 up to 1923 it was office and factory for the House of Harper, which—what with innumerable books and four periodicals—for half a century dominated American publishing. The opening now sacred to the elevated is still called Franklin Square; and atop the House of Harper once stood a chubby statue of Benjamin himself. In the last ten years before the Harpers moved, Benjamin became a little shaky and had to be fastened down, for safety of the public, with a steel rod. When the Harpers finally departed, Professor Burges Johnson carted him away to decorate the School of Journalism at Vassar.

What figures of English and American literature have passed through that battered doorway! Thackeray, six feet



four and every inch a gentleman; Dickens, in the gaudy clothes with which he advertised his prosperity; Reade, radiating charm in every movement; the eagle-headed Mark Twain. Here E. A. Abbey and Winslow Homer came at one time to their daily work. Here for fifty years presided Alden, who could sugar-coat a lemon of rejection better than any other editor who ever lived. Here Thomas Nast, with his Santa Claus face and heart and his crusader soul, enjoyed power and reputation such as no other cartoonist in our long line has since achieved. Tammany Hall and the corrupt City Hall at which he tilted were a stone's throw away; at one time—by the wish of his employers rather than his own—he went to his work under protective guard. The square still seems fragrant with the memory of George William Curtis, finest soul of American letters. Here came a tall, gangling boy, even then with a touch of Quaker primness about his manner, to sell his first drawings. The art editor took one look at his mastery of line, and seized upon them. Surely the middle-aged or elderly reader must remember those "Pepper and Salt" drawings of Howard Pyle in "Harper's Young People." A boy-captain of the Foreign Legion, fresh from the defeats of 1870, found that he could draw people as well as military maps and faltered up those stairs with his first modest attempts. He became De Thulstrup, whose humanity of style long dominated the Harper periodicals. Once a young contributor called upon Alden, carrying a dog-eared manuscript. Alden took a look at the boy's face and asked him to luncheon. He nearly choked over this, his first full meal for a week. Before they left the table, Alden had purchased from James Otis "Toby Tyler,

or Ten Weeks with a Circus." Do you remember it? If not, certainly your boys do. It is going yet. Motley and Parsons and Bancroft; Rhinehart and Reginald Birch and Jessie Sheppard and Remington and Church; Bayard Taylor and William Black and James Barnes and Constance Fenimore Woolson—but a complete list of the ghosts which haunt that battered doorway would be a catalogue.

Exactly across the street rises a somewhat more pretentious building of light stone. It has, to this day, the only gilded fire-escape in New York. Its involved ironwork breaks out into figures of horses and oddly costumed men engaged in sporting pursuits like running, boxing, and steeplechasing; and an involved monogram resolves itself into the initials "R.K.F." This was and is the building of the "Police Gazette." In the eighties of the last century, literature took itself a little more seriously and sport took itself a little more lightly than to-day. The celebrities of letters, en route to Harpers, may have drawn the skirts of their frock-coats away from those other celebrities who crossed their path in Franklin Square—Buck Ewing with his hat on one side of his head; King Kelley; Steve Brodie, the bridge-jumper; lastly the stalwart, faintly swaggering figure, the fierce yet benevolent expression—like that of an English bulldog or a great king—the determined mustaches, of yours truly John L. Sullivan. In excited, straggling procession, small boys followed him across the square. Perhaps he arrived just in time to encounter Richard K. Fox, king of the sports, descending from the racing s Surrey behind his stylish team of matched blacks. The "Police Gazette" may have as great a circulation now as then, but

it holds no such place in American life. The sporting pages have cut into its gossip and pictures of pugilists, ball-players, and wrestlers; and its old front pages where ladies being rescued from carriage accidents, showed their Victorian limbs almost to the knee, would have no thrill for this age of undress. The periodical has retired to the upper floors. As recently as twenty years ago the show-windows on the ground floor, now given over to commerce, displayed the "Police Gazette" diamond belt, the four-ounce gloves brandished in this or that "championship fistic encounter," and a much-enlarged photograph of Richard K. Fox in his top-hat, checked suit, skin-tight kid gloves, gold-headed cane and five-carat diamond stud.

Before returning to the bridge entrance, take a little excursion to the north. A tablet on the bridge pier marks the site of that house where Washington lived when this was the capital of the United States. It disappeared early in the nineteenth century. To judge from its pictures, it had no great distinction. But on the first block of Cherry Street—falling away abruptly northward—stand houses almost as old. If none of them beheld the passage of his Excellency on that charger which served him during the Revolution or in his proud coach and four, they housed citizens who had seen it. Number Twenty-three, according to the guide-books, was the haunt of the privateers during the War of 1812; and it looks older than that. Beside it stretch other houses with ornamental doorways and glimpses of slenderly balustered staircases. Wealthy skippers inhabited them once, and, later, the editors and prosperous contributors of the publishing houses in Franklin Square.



BROOKLYN BRIDGE



Now the district is Little Spain—not Spain of Latin-America, but of Andalusia and Castile. Once from the ground-floor of this same Number Twenty-three there looked out on me as I passed a pair of great, grave, black eyes; and strings of drying red peppers fringed her face. The modest shop-windows display enormous loaves of bread slashed in an alligator-skin design, tins of olive oil, red ollas, shiny and violent prints of the royal family. And midway of the block a window bears a crude painting of an Association football player crowned with the legend: "Athletic—Café y Billar."

Back to the bridge entrance: and here—a discovery of my own. In New York proper, crowded conditions and the automobile have rendered pedestrianism almost impossible. There is enough to see and to admire, Heaven knows, in a walk through the shopping district of middle Fifth Avenue or the theatrical district of Broadway; but what with the traffic stops and the perilous dodging at the curbs, it is exercise for the nerves rather than for the body. However, the foot-path of the Brooklyn Bridge affords a mile straightaway with clear sea air, breath-catching views, and no interruptions whatever. I am not the sole discoverer, I find. Every time I cross, I encounter other pedestrians whose brisk, athletic gait and curious glances show that they are not walking in pursuit of their business. And the last time, hearing a soft padding behind me, I turned to behold two broad-shouldered young men in caps, sweaters, and sneakers, advancing at a jog-trot. As they passed, the nearest flashed a cauliflower ear. Plainly these were pugilists in training.



As the foot-path comes out into the open, stop and look back. To the southward is still another view of the sky-scraper mass, almost as alluring as that from the surface of the Hudson. Here, on days when the violet mists obscure the distance, it is a curving cliff; the upper turrets of the higher structures might be castles or temples balanced on the dizzy edge. To the northward the building mass appears to dip to a wide valley. You are gazing down on to the roofs of the East Side, broken by the high, twin towers of the Redemptorist Church near Avenue A. This is the one larger aspect in which New York looks like a European town; it bears a haunting resemblance to the view of Paris from Montmartre. In the middle distance, the white Municipal Building shows its most gracious aspect. That irregular structure must be seen at the proper angle, or it is nothing. From some viewpoints, its upper towers seem constructed without plan out of a child's building blocks. From the bridge, as from the famous view down Chambers Street, it says in full what the architect meant.

A few steps beyond the bridge tower, and the harbor bursts upon you. Far below to southward runs the range of the East Side docks, jammed with battered freighters or proud liners back from the ports of South America and the Indies. North River, blue and yellow, stretches on a calm day in a watered-silk pattern, splashed with the snowy-violet wakes of tugs, of barges, of freighters moving to dock, of lumber-schooners or airy yachts tacking up toward the Sound. Governors' Island, low-lying, geometrically patterned, ends the southern view. At the north, the sky-scraper district of Brooklyn closes in to make this "river"

—which is really the terminus of the Sound—appear a lake. An opening like the mouth of a stream cuts into the building-line. This is the Brooklyn Navy Yard. If it is your lucky day, you may behold the passage under the bridge of a battle-ship or cruiser; from far above, exchange hailing-signs with the men in the crow's-nest. The spans of the Williamsburg Bridge and the Queensboro Bridge slash the distance. Satisfactory both, the one with its ornament of four great balls topping its towers and the other with the lacy structure of a battle-ship's mast; but neither has caught the sense of proportionate solidity and yet of lightness and of flight which distinguishes the incomparable Brooklyn Bridge.

## *Chapter X*

### CHINATOWN YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY

BETWEEN the bridge and Chatham Square lie Five Points and Mulberry Bend, or what was once Five Points and Mulberry Bend. To the younger generation, these are only antique geographical terms; to the elderly, they still bring up a picture of misery and degradation, gin and rum. In the middle of the last century, the drunkard of the temperance lecture always ended his career in a gutter of Five Points; our lesser Hogarths of the White Ribbon tracts immortalized in woodcuts the trash-laden alleys, the slatternly wives, and the reeling citizens of Mulberry Bend. And in truth, this low-lying swampy district, whose springs the city is still draining with trouble and expense, was for a century and a half a dark and bloody ground. Here during that obscure episode, the slave insurrection of 1740, the enraged whites burned fourteen negroes to death; here, in the early nineteenth century, ripened the fruit for the busy gallows in Washington Square. A sinister brutality marked its crimes: a wife beaten to death with a gin-bottle by her drunken husband; a respectable citizen, led by chance into this quarter, ending with his pockets rifled and his throat cut. It kept something of this old cast, indeed, until the last decade of the century. Then, mainly through the hammering of



CHINATOWN



Jacob Riis, the municipality took a hand. Five Points and Mulberry Bend were razed to the ground for the largest of our down-town parks. On their northwestern edge, we set the new police headquarters and the Tombs Prison. As though in further memorial of the somber past, we have erected near the northern border the Criminal Courts Building. And toward this quarter the sky-scraper district has of late begun a slow advance. But though Mulberry Park is a life-saver for the tenement children from the district to the north this, as though some old curse lingered, remains a singularly bleak and unattractive district. If you want to know how it looked in the days of our fathers, follow Worth Street eastward past the park. A few steps beyond the point where it breaks into the building mass, stands—now vacant—a squeezed wooden building whose multiplicity of little nondescript windows hints at crowded conditions, poverty, squalor. Once all Five Points and Mulberry Bend looked like that.

Turn now from the park uphill through Park Street. You pass that old brown church, which was once the Roman Catholic Cathedral of New York, and Chinatown suddenly opens for you its drama. You are at the junction of Mott and Pell streets, the head of an irregular triangle; to both sides stream color and bizarre form. The Chinese were no sooner granted this foothold between the massed misery of Five Points and the loud dissipation of the old Bowery than they began to transform a run-down tenement district into an imitation of China. A house to them is not a house until its outside blazes with color and decoration. The fire-escapes of New York tenements afforded a splendid start.



Notice, with what humor and appreciation you have, that all the gilded balconies and the overhanging façades, all the ornamentation of yellow, green, and vermilion, have the fire-escape for a foundation. The owner of one building in Pell Street is too poor or too economical to follow the prevailing fashion. But he has compromised with a sense of decent civic interest by painting the front wall bright red and the fire-escape a vivid peacock blue.

Under this run the shop-windows of Chinatown, against which I can flatten my nose a whole afternoon long. Even the faked and gaudy wares and fabrics despised by the Chinese themselves and imported only for the tourist-trade have when seen as a mass an inspired beauty. And sprinkled among these imitations in the windows of the more prosperous shops lie real Oriental goods for the Chinese themselves or for Occidentals of taste and understanding: bright vases in Canton medallion; head-dresses flaunting in pompons and streamers a dozen harmonized colors; heavy, exquisite embroideries; glazed buddhas or goddesses; bracelets and pendants hand-wrought in dragon or flower designs out of unalloyed red gold. I linger as long before the humbler shops, which exist not for the extravagances of the tourist but for the necessities of the Chinese. This race has an inherent sense of form; it makes its objects of common use simply and beautifully. There is a quiet satisfaction of the eye in a Chinese shop-window filled with stirring-sticks, chop-sticks, ten-cent bowls, ginger jars, even pressed carcasses of ducks and pigeons! The artistically gardened windows of Fifth Avenue fall short of these accidental effects.

The street itself—but that, to one who knew his China-

town twenty or even fifteen years ago, is a disappointment. Then the inhabitants shuffled past in felt shoes, or in rainy weather on elevated clogs. Nine tenths of them wore pig-tails; a good half, round caps with bright buttons at the top. Wadded jackets and wide, flapping trousers were the rule; European clothes the exception. In summer, when the necessity for a breath of air overcame their horror of the public gaze, the women came forth in the subdued green or blue tunics appropriate to street wear, their glossy black hair pinned elaborately with combs and fastenings of beaten gold and jade. But the pigtail, symbol of slavery, passed with the overthrow of the Manchu dynasty. That gone, the rest followed naturally. Felt shoes were ill adapted to city pavement; American clothes were cheaper and more suitable to this climate than wadded jackets. Besides, the Chinese of this quarter have always believed most ardently in the Chinese Republic. Much of the plotting which emancipated China—only to hurl her into a temporary chaos—proceeded behind these ornamented balconies. And in their reformed clothes they symbolize the new forward look of the Old Country.

Just before the crash of the old system, Chinatown rose to its climax of picturesqueness, bizarre dissipation, hidden and obscure disorder, strange varieties of crime—everything which the name formerly connoted to the up-town tourist. The neighboring Bowery was still a loud and squalid Tenderloin of the tenement district, not as now a pallidly decadent nondescript. Its vices and habits reacted on its yellow neighbors. Those were the days of the great On Leong-Hip Sing war, which broke out one night in

1904 with two murders and the arrest of two suspicious characters wearing chain mail under their blouses. It was some time before the New York newspapers realized what any San Franciscan could have told them, that this was a genuine highbinder feud. The On-Leong Tong, representing the Interests, had grabbed the privilege of guarding the gambling-houses and opium joints. The Hip Sing Tong, representing the common people, wanted it. When the On Leongs grew insolent with privilege, the Hip Sings set out to get their rights with 45-caliber revolvers. The On Leongs thereupon armed themselves to even the score; and war broke out.

A reporter "on the street," I specialized on the Tong war. My fellows of the local room used to call me "Ah Bill." It was my pride to arrive in the trail of the coroner. On the afternoon of a Chinese New Year's day came shocking news. One faction or the other had broken the Truce of the Gods. It had shot up the town on the great holiday. Two merchants, proceeding in their long, silken robes and their caps with red buttons to leave eighteen-inch red calling-cards, had died from a dozen bullets in the doorways of Mott Street. As I arrived on the scene, I stopped before the shop which still occupies the corner of Mott and Pell. The Chinese proprietor, wearing clogs and an apron over his blouse, was scrubbing the sidewalk—washing away human gore and small fragments of human remains. He did this with the studied indifference which the Chinese, like the Englishman, knows how to assume when most deeply moved. It might have been just casual snow.

Not only in Chinatown but in Bronx laundries and

Newark restaurants Chinamen died at the rate of two and three a week of bullets or knife-blades. The factions, who shot but awkwardly themselves, began importing experts from San Francisco. A certain Ng Moy was not only a crack pistol-shot but a two-knife man. A Bowery loafer with a perverted sense of humor used to creep up behind Chinamen in the street, hiss that dreaded name into their ears, and watch them jump for the nearest doorway. Mock Duck deserves mention. He looked like a Chinese choir-boy. Often when trouble broke out he had the misfortune to be observed lingering in the neighborhood. But the police never got anything on him; although once, ten minutes after a shooting, they found him in bed fully dressed even to his shoes. Tom Lee, known as the Mayor of Chinatown, either belonged to the On Leong faction or trailed with it. Of fine afternoons he sat before his store in Mott Street, toying with the wisp of a beard which finished off his lean old face, smoking an infinitesimal pipe and protesting to the press that while the episode shocked him he knew nothing about it—nothing. Gin Gum, his secretary, talked volubly on the villainy of the Hip Sings, the unpolluted innocence of the On Leongs. At Hip Sing headquarters in the Bowery the inquiring reporter, approaching the door, saw a panel open, glimpsed a yellow face, caught a thick whisper, "What you want?"—and before he could answer, the panel closed. The police could do nothing at all. The cement of old Chinese society was fear. The victim's brother, who stood beside him when he died, would go into court and swear that he saw nothing.

This guerilla war rose to a pair of major engagements.

First, the rival factions shot at each other from behind the elevated pillars in the Bowery. A stray bullet went through the window of a saloon and killed a white man at the bar. Then one night when the theater in Doyers Street was packed with Chinese and when the tourists had not yet arrived, someone threw a lighted pack of giant fire-crackers on to the stage. Bang-bang-bang out of the confusion came a series of sharper explosions, and three marked Chinese, shot from behind, rolled dead under the benches. By now the thing had gone far enough; the Chinese consul-general played his trump card, reserved for such crises as this. He cabled to China the names of the chief offenders and suspects, had their relatives arrested, and served polite notice on Hip Sings and On Leongs that if this thing didn't stop, the headsman's sword would begin to glint in the sunshine of Canton Province. So there was a grand peace-banquet with forty courses, barrels of rice brandy, and much parade of teakwood furniture, embroidered hangings, silken robes. A Tammany judge was allowed to preside and take the credit.

The Chinese theater seemed to the police a center of trouble and disturbance. They closed it; and it never reopened. It stood in Doyers Street, that short thoroughfare which curves from the Bowery to Pell Street and gives the map of this district the pattern of a Chinese letter. Now a Bowery mission has taken over the plant. Every night at ten the missionaries gather up sodden drifters of the Bowery, hold services with them for an hour, lead them into the basement for a supper of bread and coffee, and bed them down on the floor. Every afternoon the megaphone man of



the Seeing Chinatown wagon stands before the pulpit on the abandoned stage and entertains his audience with the tale of the great highbinder shooting and a description of the opium joint, the gambling-house, and the secret passage which used to flourish in the basement. He tells the sober truth. While the actors chanted from the stage old glories of dead dynasties, a certain white man who achieved notoriety in the Rosenthal case was dealing faro or raking fan-tan in the cellar; and you may still see in the wall those joints which fastened in place the opium bunks. The passage, not secret any more, is there yet. It empties into a cellar of the Bowery.

Closing the theater made probably for the morality of Chinatown; and yet I am unmoral enough to remember its passing with regret. The tourists of the rubberneck wagons, allowed for a dollar a head to sit on the stage between 10 and 10:30, did not know that they were witnessing great plays, greatly performed—once you understood Chinese conventional stage gestures and grew inured to Chinese music. For this company, scholars all, offered by preference the classic plays of the Yuen Cycle; a body of dramatic literature which for depth, human understanding, romance, and poetry stands only one stage below the Greek plays of the golden age or our own Elizabethan drama. I have seen tourists giggling and snickering from their seats on the stage at the visible operations of the property man and the squalls of the leading lady, unaware that they were witnessing "Pi-Pa-Ki," the touching, immortal Story of the Lute, a play which, solely through its merits, has held the boards for six hundred years.



And those audiences! At nine o'clock, when the price of admission went down to fifty cents, bloused and pig-tailed men jammed the last remote bench. In the far corners hung two boxes, the one holding women in sober-colored silks, their banded and jeweled hair the only touch of ornament. These were respectable wives and daughters. The other was a flower-bed of soft blues, transparent greens, vivid vermilions. The ladies here were not so respectable. Over all hung a composite scent compounded of odors which ran the scale from plain bad smells to exotic perfumes.

The stories we read of Chinatown in those days held mostly the lurid thread of murder. But the adjustment of the Chinese to an alien civilization brought out prettier episodes; most memorable of all, to me, that of Moy Hueng, the Purchased Bride. I think of it whenever I pass the tenement of 12 Mott Street, to which her husband, Hoy, brought her after their marriage. Moy Hueng of Boston was apparently no more than fifteen years old, and Hoy of New York had probably bought her, following old Chinese custom, from her father. Thereupon the Gerry Society gathered her in. Never did prettier figure stand before a booking sergeant than Moy Hueng in her bridal dress—light blue, banded and brocaded with subtle neutral tints; embroidered fillets binding her hair, flower-like pompons falling over her ears, gold and jade ringing her wrists and fingers. And out of this finery peeped a little face which could be compared only to a tea-rose. Even the hardened police matrons knelt beside her to pat her hand and reassure her. She took it at first as an adventure, incident to her new

way of life. But the days passed; locked up in the Gerry Society rooms, her bridal finery replaced by the uniform garments of an institution, the tea-rose began to fade. At each hearing of the case, she grew more wan and frightened and pathetic. As for Hoy the bridegroom—when the police took Moy Hueng away, he used to run after them and shake the bars of the elevator. Well, common sense and human feeling won the day. Probably Hoy had bought Moy Hueng. But Moy Hueng wanted to be bought; that was the point. Released, her bridal finery restored, she received the women reporters in her flat at 12 Mott Street. Moy Hueng did the interviewing. Through an interpreter, she questioned them as to their ages and matrimonial state. When she found that many of them were past thirty and not yet married, a faint patronage tinged her manner.

"I hope you all marry very soon and give your husbands many, many children!" she said at parting.

It all changed and passed; for the good of the Chinese, if you ask my opinion. Set down on a hill between the cheap Tenderloin of the Bowery and the degraded slum of Five Points, bedeviled by criminal adventurers who had left China to escape the headsman, bewildered by the necessity of adjustment to an alien civilization, they have lifted themselves through sheer leverage of that character which is the inheritance of the Chinese. Many a custom went in the trail of the pigtail. For example, the old religion has almost disappeared. The two greatest joss-houses now exist, I suspect, solely for the tourist. They are worth seeing nevertheless, if only for the exquisite bronze pagoda and the old paintings of the Buddhist hell in the one at 16 Mott

Street. But the ravishingly pretty Chinese girl who lectures you in perfect English, the spectacled student-boy who offers you souvenirs at the door—plainly they do not believe it at all. The only worshipers who knock their heads on the floor and burn punk-sticks to the Gods of the Upper Kingdom are a few seafaring men off the steamers in harbor, or old fellows past learning new ways. And these devotees worship in temples which the tourist never sees. Most of the younger generation have become either Christians or intellectual agnostics. The sight most typical of modern Chinatown is the assembly-room of the Baptist Mission in Doyers Street. There, any week-day night, two hundred young men and women struggle with English composition, American history, modern European languages, science. The American-born Chinese have a passion for education, as witness their enrolment in our local universities.

The theater has reopened in other quarters, but not for tourists. No white man gets past the door except by pull and favor. The young women—short-skirted, bobbed-haired, high-heeled—sit now in the pit, beside escorts in bell-bottomed trousers and Kollege-Kut coats. The company comes directly from China. Bonded by the immigration authorities, they play a circuit which includes Seattle, San Francisco, and Chicago. The actresses are women, not female impersonators. That innovation so shocks a few of the older generation that they refuse to patronize the theater any more. Twenty-five years ago, I saw the first appearance of a real woman on the Chino-American stage. The audience, when she entered, broke into shamefaced snickers. It was exactly like the first appearance of the first

undressing act on Broadway. These excellent actors present not only the great classic plays—as “Pi-Pa-Ki,” “The Orphan,” “Seven-in-the-Family-All-Good,” “The Sorrows of Hang,” “Building the New Bridge”—but certain modern comedies brought forth by the upheaval in China. I have seen the audience in convulsions over a burlesque of a European woman.

Chinese New Year's in February brings out a touch of native color; a few of the merchants doff for the holiday their Fedora hats and fur-lined overcoats and don the wadded tunic and the buttoned cap. There are great feasts at the restaurants, wherein half the guests array themselves in the gracious old costume. And few mothers are so unappreciative as to dress their little children in kilts and skirts. The babies, holding reception in the doorways—any Chinaman will walk a mile to pet a child—wear still the wide-hipped trousers, the little wadded and embroidered tunics, and the round caps with gold ornaments. But in its attitude toward dress Chinatown is becoming even as Alsace or the Tyrol or Brittany, where the inhabitants bring out the local costumes for festivals only.

I will not say that Chinatown has no hop joints left; I will not say that a yellow steward on shore-leave cannot still find a fan-tan game. But certainly these dissipations are languishing on Pell and Mott and Doyers streets. They have moved themselves, in great part, to a neighboring suburb across the Hudson.

Don't let all this keep you from Chinatown. The Chinese remain the Chinese, doing all things quaintly and beautifully. Mott and Pell and Doyers streets hold more pleasure

for the discriminating eye than any other district of New York. A walk through Chinatown is worth while for the shop-windows alone; for the glimpses, like a fragment from a Rembrandt, of dark, suggestive interiors: for the decorations and excellent Oriental food of the restaurants: for the objects of art in the joss-houses—and for the smell of peanut oil. Once you get that scent in your nostrils, you will return again and again.

## Chapter XI

### GALATEA OF GREENWICH VILLAGE

A YOUNG man from New York went to represent his firm in a Southern city so conservative that the girls still go to parties with chaperons, the press still refers to the underpinning of the ladies as limbs, and the *jeunesse dorée* still pays dinner calls. Having the proper formal manners, pleasing personality and good connections, he made social headway. A year or so, and he had penetrated into the Inner Circle. Then he seemed to encounter a submerged snag. Invitations came no more; the young ladies always had other engagements; the dowagers cut him dead or returned his bow with a slow, prim, sad inclination of the head.

Perplexed, he went to his best friend in town and asked some frank questions.

"Well," said the Southerner after the proper courteous palaver, "you see it's this way. The ladies don't feel quite the same to you since you let it out to Miss Lucy that you came from Greenwich Village."

The young man had never thought of that. But he saw at once—he saw! Though he had squared his conduct all his days to standards of a conventional Knickerbocker family, though he had never dined in a basement café, practised



art, or promoted the Social Revolution, he was indeed a native and nursling of Greenwich Village. Abashed, he bowed his head. Nothing could be done about it!

The idea stands fixed in popular American psychology. Greenwich Village is the Symbol of Sin. Not sordid, squalid sin, but (since I am at the moment alliterating s's) Snappy Sin, and for that reason all the more perniciously attractive. The geographical term represents a state of mind. It means to the unco good, the conventional and the conservative a combination of art radicalism, sex radicalism and Red Radicalism. It stands for long-haired men with flowing ties and soiled finger-nails. Until all the sex began to bob, it stood for short-haired women.

What would you say now if I, who have frequented Greenwich Village for twenty-two years, pronounced this Greenwich Village a myth?

At least, it was a myth in the beginning. Afterward a little commercial exploitation made it for a time almost a reality. And then—it faded back again into the ghostly world of fancy. It was like the Greek legend of Pygmalion and Galatea. Pygmalion prayed the gods to give his statue life. They heard his prayer. And after a few hours as a woman, she became again a cold, unreal statue, Greenwich Village is the Galatea of New York.

The prayer which gave feeble and transitory life to the Greenwich Village myth was that of a realtor to his uffish gods. The true story centers round a real-estate scheme which had a success wholly unexpected—both in volume and in character.

To begin before the beginning: Greenwich Village

proper is bounded on the east by Sixth Avenue, on the west by the Hudson River, on the north by Fourteenth Street. The southern boundary is less definite. I should set it at about Charlton Street. This district began life as a real village, nearly as old as New York, and much more quaint. There Aaron Burr had his beautiful and romantic country place. There Tom Paine, unable to sustain life in a Great City, wrote in rustic solitude his "Crisis." The streets, laid out by the migrating Indians, the homing cows and the exploring pioneers, rambled across each other without order or pattern. In the first quarter of the eighteenth century came the disaster that initiated progress. Yellow fever broke out virulently in that small city south of Canal Street which was then New York. Greenwich Village had no mosquitoes. The people of the metropolitan district did not know of course that infected mosquitoes caused the plague. They only saw that the highland to the north had as by miracle escaped. To this refuge they fled, and camped out for the summer. The very banks established themselves in tents along a country lane; hence Bank Street. The refugees liked this pleasant site so well that many of them remained and built. By the thirties, it had even its fashionable quarter—prosperous business and professional men, who commuted by saddle or buggy to their offices in New York. The big city grew northward and eventually absorbed the Village. When this happened, the town fathers patched the streets as best they could on to the mathematical gridiron pattern of the Greater City. The curious results remain even to this day. Take West Fourth Street, for example. It starts quite regularly and properly. At Seventh Avenue it begins to go

wild. It runs amuck across West Tenth Street, West Eleventh Street, West Twelfth Street, and finally, in despair of penetrating further north, commits suicide in the arms of West Thirteenth Street. West Twelfth Street goes according to pattern for a time. Then it stops, to reappear at a totally illogical spot with the Londonish appellation of Little West Twelfth.

Soon after the Greater City took this district over, the Irish began flooding into New York. They settled largely in Greenwich Village. It became the Ninth Ward, a main pillar of Tammany Hall; special habitat of those "vamps" or volunteer firemen who imparted so much vivacity, amusement, and drama to the New York of seventy-five years ago.

To the west of the Village lay the Washington Square region, habitat by the forties of the distinguished Knickerbocker aristocracy. This was never part of Greenwich Village; in fact, the square began metropolitan life as the potter's field of New York and site of the common gallows. But as the city grew northward mile after mile, it left these two districts a back-wash of progress. The sky-scraper district shied and balked a quarter of a mile to the south. The new residence district of gigantic apartment-houses began many miles to the north. In time, popular terminology stretched the term "Greenwich Village" to include Washington Square and its northern fringe.

Now and then a group of Greenwich Village rookeries gave place to a tenement or a warehouse; otherwise there was no building. Externally it changed not. Internally, however, jury partitions began to split the proportionate dignity of fine old parlors or stately bedroom suites; for by the





WASHINGTON SQUARE

end of the last century even the substantial and dignified four-story-and-basement mansions of Greenwich Village had become cheap boarding-houses, or were advertising furnished rooms.

The rest was perhaps inevitable. As early as the Romantic Nineties of the last century, budding aspirants of the fine arts began to inhabit Greenwich Village. The district was short on bath-tubs and long on colonial fan-lights, short on sanitation and long on carved marble fireplaces, short on steam heat and long on mysterious doorways. Add that the French population with their unsurpassed table d'hôte restaurants fringed it on one side, that the Italians with their color and vivacity impinged on the other, that rents were ridiculously cheap—and any one who understands artists knows why they preferred Greenwich Village to Harlem. For two decades this important shift in population went on unnoticed by the press; and much of the young work which was remaking American literature and American painting—the drama had to wait a decade for its elevation—proceeded from the Village. At Sixty-one Washington Square there stood and still stands a mansion of the forties, transformed by the nineties into a rooming-house. Madame the Chatelaine was a most sprightly and witty Frenchwoman. There, Frank Norris wrote the final draft of his unique "McTeague"; Gelett Burgess at least part of "Vivette"; James Hopper his early short stories; Willa Cather some of her verse. It had even a dim tradition of Stephen Crane. Next door, Rose O'Neill was charging upward from a popular illustrator to a painter of unique style and imagination. In a charming and irregular old house on



Grove Street worked Robert Blum, as sound a painter as this country ever knew. Into his studio when he died stepped Jules Guérin, he of the magical line and voluptuous color.

Those were the halcyon days. The invaders of Greenwich Village had really taken the magic country of Bohemia. They were Bohemian—how old-fashioned the world seems now!—and how charming! But I have observed that the true Bohemian never knows that he is living in Bohemia while he is there. Get him self-conscious, and pouf! the fine flavor departs. What was alertness becomes a pose. These conquerors of Greenwich Village lived irregularly and too often for the day. They dined, under normal circumstances, on their own kitchenette cooking, or in hole-in-the-wall Italian restaurants where the table d'hôte was as cheap as thirty-five cents. When life sat easy upon them and a manuscript or painting showed signs of selling, they went for dinner, as likely as not, to the Hotel Griffou in Ninth Street. This was as French as the Boulevard St. Michel—French even to the amiable custom of setting forth the tables, in pleasant summer weather, among the gardens of the big back yard. Chained to one of the trees there flourished for a time Oliver Herford's baby bear. He signed his warrant of banishment with his own teeth, this gentle but temperamental beast, when he bit the proprietor. And so he passed on to the Bronx Zoo. "How ever did you come to get him?" asked a friend. "Well, it's this way," replied Herford, "I inherited three hundred dollars, and I was so afraid I'd spend it foolishly that I bought the bear."

When the manuscript or the picture sold, it called for a

dinner at the Brevoort. The main dining-room at that dear, delicious, temperamental old French hostelry was padlocked in 1925. For it maintained into less liberal times the institution which first gave it prestige—the best of French wines. Delmonico's itself never offered better cooking. And there, often, the young aspirant had sight of the Elder Sages. That man with the wise but fiery eyes, talking alternately in French and English, and talking so well that the very waiters stopped work to listen—he was John La Farge. Heads turned and soup-spoons poised in midair at the entry of an old man all in white, with a face like a benevolent eagle, a head like an albino lion, and a walk which had the same drawling quality as his voice. Need I name him as Mark Twain? Unnoticed in the corner sat a quiet, plump man, his face all extraordinary curves and his manners touched with old gentility. He lived rather obscurely as William Sydney Porter; he died immortal as O. Henry. Sometimes Richard Harding Davis forsook the haunts of the Van Bibbers to plunge into the comparative Bohemianism of the Brevoort. He was known, if for nothing else, by his wrist-watch, the first ever seen in these parts. And sprinkled among them sat those whose fame was peeping over the horizon—Glackens, just beginning to prove in black-and-white that the obviously ugly may be the supremely beautiful, and about to prove it in oils; May and James Preston, who were putting a new note into American illustration; Lawson; Davies; John Sloan; Boardman Robinson; Theodore Dreiser; Mary Heaton Vorse; Henry Raleigh; even, in the later years of the halcyon period, a

young semi-professional baseball player who was fated to reach the heights of art and die young—George Bellows.

In those days, radicalism was somewhat fashionable. And Greenwich Village radicals, settling the future of the world over a seidel of beer, laid everything, past, present, and future, to economic determinism. Bless them, some among them had so little idea of practical economics that they didn't know where the dime for the beer was coming from. Perhaps that was why the idea so fascinated them. Well, economic determinism came to Greenwich Village, and things were never the same again.

The herald of economic determinism was a certain real-estate man. Long had he operated in Greenwich Village; it was sprinkled with his holdings, options, and leases. He knew artists—their tricks and their manners. As his enterprise grew, he took thought with himself. Commerce had passed the Village by. Indeed the city fathers had of late enacted a new zoning law, by which no more factories or stores could move into some parts of the district; it must be kept for residence. The demand for good, bourgeois, steam-heated, marquetry-floored, white-tiled apartments was reaching out toward the suburbs, where the children would have breathing-room. But the artists—they could be exploited. Hadn't they been exploited, with most satisfactory results, in the Chelsea district of London, the Montmartre and Latin Quarter districts of Paris? Tentatively, he employed a press-agent, with orders to get Greenwich Village and its fascinating artistic atmosphere into the newspapers. This anonymous maker of history worked well; but, then, the times worked with him. Newspapers

like to freshen up their columns with quaint local color. The teeming foreign populations of the East Side used to furnish that interest for New York. Time was when a small and bloodless Yiddish riot could be sold for a column by any reporter with the sprightly touch. But the American Colony in New York had grown a little weary of the European population and was beginning to wonder when it would itself be pushed off Manhattan. Then along came this new splash of the picturesque. Within two years, Greenwich Village, the unconventional Montmartre of Gotham, sprinkled every newspaper in New York; another year, and its fame had reached the interior.

Throughout the land, the advance-guard of the hard-boiled younger generation heard the call. Talented and aspiring youth—or such as could raise the price—pulled up stakes and emigrated to New York, shouting the battle-cry of Freedom and Self-expression. From New York itself came another element—an unnamed class of moneyed drifters utterly without talent but fascinated by the artistic life. The press-agent's dream took on a semblance of reality. Greenwich Village began to look like a Latin Quarter. Façades burst into rainbow colors. Young women in smocks and flat heels darted in and out of the picturesque doorways. Nearly a decade ahead of the fashion, they bobbed their hair. Young men with flowing hair and ties enlivened the crowds. Tumbledown old buildings which once housed "panteries" or small saloons were in process of transformation into affected specialty shops or arty tea-rooms. New restaurants sprang up everywhere, mostly in basements. And now the inspired real-estate man and his fellows

began to realize on the salary of the press-agent. Cellars that once rented for fifty dollars a month as junk-shops were bringing two hundred dollars as tea-rooms or Bohemian restaurants; and attics which in 1911 could not be let at any price yielded as studios the return of up-town flats.

## *Chapter XII*

### GALATEA RESUMES THE MARBLE

THE picturesque district below Fourteenth Street did not become the Greenwich Village of tradition until the rubber-neck wagon found its possibilities. Country bridal couples and small-town sports, beholding Life in the cellar cafés with picturesque names, liked the show even better than Chinatown. Presently Bohemianism returned dividends. To meet this demand, new restaurants sprang up, each vying with each for the True Artistic Atmosphere. Having a large audience now, the poseurs posed even more frantically. The demand for this element outran the supply. One establishment collected a set of young I.W.W.'s with interesting or poetic faces, dressed them in flowing ties, instructed them to shave only biweekly and cut their hair never, taught them a few cubist, futurist, and communist phrases, gave them board and wages to sit after dinner and impersonate the "artistic crowd."

By now, the affair had got beyond control of the original press-agent. The out-of-town newspapers had taken the bit into their teeth. And at about the time when the rubber-neck wagon opened its new route, the public—this time unassisted by the press-agent—made a discovery. There was free love in Greenwich Village, open and flaunting! Many a



young aspirant for attention, who had never thought of free love before, leaped to this new opportunity for self-expression. Whereof I can tell a serious scandal. One night a visitor from—let us say Topeka, Kansas—dined with a Greenwich Villager at a large and popular Bohemian restaurant.

"Hello!" said the Kansan, "there's a couple from the old home town—there in the corner."

"Yes," said the Villager, "Johnnie Jones and Sally Smith. One of our best-known pairs of free lovers. They don't believe in marriage, but—"

"Free love your eye!" retorted the Kansan, "They were married eight years ago last June by the Rev. Albert T. Jenkins at the Second Congregational Church. Don't I know? Wasn't I one of the ushers?"

"Then if you value their happiness," whispered the Villager, "don't make yourself known to them and get out of here as quietly as possible. You would embarrass them horribly. . . ."

And the tourists came by night and by day—came with guides or ventured unescorted on thrilling little adventures of their own. A rising young journalist whom I met once in New Mexico told me that the Greenwich Village craze gave him his higher education. When he entered the College of the City of New York as a working student, he lodged in Greenwich Village with a young fictionist who turned out copy at a cent a word for the confession magazines, and with an apprentice illustrator who embellished department-store catalogues. Their humble apartment stood on the second floor front. One dark autumn afternoon they were all

working, for better light, close to the window. The illustrator glanced away from his drawing-board and, "Say, look at that!" he said. A small but intent crowd stood on the pavement outside.

"Tourists!" pronounced the student. "Are you fellows game for a little fun?" He ran downstairs and addressed the crowd in the accents of a ballyhoo man.

"Step up, ladies and gents, and see the artists at work!" he barked. "Twenty-five cents admission."

The tourists reached for their pocketbooks. An unexpected turn of events, this; but the student was a quick thinker. He rushed upstairs and rapidly sketched out the drama to the cast. When the tourists entered, the illustrator was blocking out a most atrociously futuristic painting and the author, having jerked the confessions of a manicure girl from his machine, was composing free and post-impressionist verse. Encouraged by the student, he read the tourists what he had written. The show, simple though it was, made a great hit.

When the student finally cleared the room, the writing man said:

"Bill, it's a discovery. You're working your way through college. Here's a magnificent graft. Set up as a guide to Greenwich Village! We'll all help."

Bill rallied about him his friends—and he had many. The gorgeous humor of the thing appealed to them. Within a month he was living on his joke. For twenty-five cents he would show *Artists at Work*. For fifty cents, he would add a *Trip to the Bohemian Dens*. For a dollar he would exhibit the *ménage of a Free Love Couple*. Various prop-

erly married young people of his acquaintance posed in this capacity, as their engagements or their moods permitted. One couple—this was the star act—would even deliver a lecture on “Free Unions as Contrasted with Bourgeois Marriage.”

Now, it happened that a woman's club in the Northwest decided to make a social survey of New York, with a view to guiding young girls seeking work in the Great Metropolis. The woman employed for the investigation steered of course straight for Greenwich Village; and she fell into the clutches of Bill. She wanted an exhaustive three-day trip. Bill made the rounds of his accomplices.

“Listen, boys and girls,” he said, “I’ve given you a lot of trouble in the past, and I suppose the joke’s wearing pretty thin. But I get my sheepskin next month, and I won’t bother you any more after that. This is a very special job. For the luvva Mike get in now and give the old lady what she expects to see. Be shameless!”

Three days later, the investigator paid Bill off.

“Is there anything more I can do for you?” he asked politely as he pocketed the check.

“Yes, one thing,” said the lady investigator, looking him squarely in the eyes, “you can give me your mother’s address. . . .”

Froth mostly, beaten up by advertising. One third of it was pose and commercial fake; one third an adolescent joke like the shows his friends used to give for Bill; and one third just youth, beautiful and humorless youth, knocking at the gates of the future or trying to find itself. Under the froth, however, lay much sound liquor. Some of the older

artistic element, disliking the change in the Village and the rise in studio rent, moved away. But most of them stayed on. The Village was home to them. As one eminent painter remarked, "It is the only place in New York where you may gossip with your neighbors at the corner drug store, and where without losing caste you may carry your own pressed trousers back from the pantorium." The jazz of the new Village amused them sometimes and sometimes irritated them. When now and then they took a dip into the Bohemian cafés, they did it somewhat in the spirit of the up-towner who goes slumming. And, just as usual, they put in their five hours a day writing, their eight hours painting. Once I interviewed a resident of Stratford-on-Avon concerning the life and ways of his town. "Don't the tourists bother you?" I asked. "Do the herds of cattle going through to the stock-yards bother your Chicago?" he retorted. "We simply don't notice them." No more, speaking generally, did the jazz era bother this element in Greenwich Village.

Also hundreds among the young arrivals brought real talent in their suitcases. How many who regard Greenwich Village as the Symbol of Snappy Sin know that it rejuvenated the American theater? By 1914 or thereabout originality on our stage had reached its lowest ebb. Managers were accepting plays by stale formula. Nothing ever reached a first night unless it resembled something that had once made money for another manager. It must be pretty; it must be romantically sentimental; above all it must end happily. Occasionally a play like Eugene Walker's "The Easiest Way" wormed itself past the guard and achieved huge success. But even then the managers refused to see.

However, just as the jazz era dawned a group of Merry Villagers sought self-expression in the drama and started the Washington Square Players. They gave their first performances in a book-shop in Eighth Street. Then a small German theater closed because of the war. Rechristened the Bandbox, it accommodated them for Tuesday and Thursday matinées. The Bandbox, geographically speaking, was not in Greenwich Village. But the Provincetown Players—as their name suggests, they started in the summer capital of Bohemia—stuck to home territory. They hired the ground floor of a small bottling-works on MacDougal Street, furnished it with a toy stage and damnably uncomfortable benches. So these two companies of young insurgents began their experiments in drama. At times their product was slight and crude; oftener it was dazzlingly original; always it was interesting. Ever it expressed the desire to see life and record ideas as the author saw and thought, not as a manager expected him to see and think. Up-towners began patronizing the Greenwich Village drama in the spirit with which the tourist used to visit the Chinese theater. But they came back—because they liked it. The theatrical managers, noticing this, lifted one or two Greenwich Village successes, produced them on Broadway. They had an immediate success. Out of those two companies came the Theatre Guild, came—indirectly—the Actors' Theater and the Stagers; came Pendleton King, Lawrence Langner, Philip Moeller; came Susan Glaspell; came finally Eugene O'Neill, rated both here and abroad as the foremost American playwright. The managers, as usual, had underestimated public taste. Every little theater and every really good



American play since 1918 stands in some degree a debtor to these humble Greenwich Village theaters.

I could, if I cared to take the time, trace a similar Greenwich Village influence—not so obvious but almost equally powerful—on the new currents in American painting, fiction, and poetry.

Finally, under the whole show—or over it if you wish—the original inhabitants of Greenwich Village lived out their lives in much the same old way, and ignored the artists. This is now the one spot on all Manhattan where people dwell in the homes of their ancestors. The original element is basically old-American with a strong infusion of third-generation Irish. To them it remains the Ninth Ward, where grandpa participated in the Draft Riots as rioter or squelcher, and ran with the vamps.

My own embodiment of this solid citizenry is Mr. Knight, from whom after much dicker—he loved to dicker—I bought in 1921 my own house. Born, reared, and educated in the Village, he still referred to it, as often as not, as the Ninth Ward. He inhabited a comfortable century-old house with a little front yard that sported a tree and a bird-cote. On his window-ledges, pigeons were always parading and cooing; for Mr. Knight fed them every day. In his back yard he kept chickens. This, I have heard, is a violation of the city ordinances; but the police on the beat, most of them natives also, overlooked his misdemeanor. If there was an ailing baby anywhere on the block, Mr. Knight very probably called each morning with a new-laid egg. “Can’t trust this cold-storage stuff,” he would say. He had a retinue of down-and-outers—mostly seafaring



men from the West Side docks—for whom he solicited of the neighbors odd jobs such as cleaning out cellars. "Please pay me their money," he said. "I keep it for them and hand it out as they need it." Some of these dependents were crippled by the fight with the seas, but more by the battle with John Barleycorn. He died in 1925; and though I have seen larger memorial services than that which his neighbors and his down-and-outers held for him, I have seen none more sincere.

On one occasion, passing the time of day on his front stoop, Mr. Knight remarked to me:

"Quite a lot of you writing and painting folks have come to the Village lately, haven't you? I like to have them around. Nice bright people. I don't care for the colors they paint their houses, though."

So much and no more had the new Greenwich Village infringed on the consciousness of good Mr. Knight.

I have compared the real-estate man, hero of this tale, to Pygmalion the sculptor whose statue came to life. And, just as in the Greek myth, his Galatea returned suddenly to the cold marble. Again economic determinism did the work. That fickle jade, having set up a house of cards, whimsically knocked it down. With the end of the war came the great housing shortage in New York. People were paying two thousand dollars a year for four-room rookeries, and anything the landlord asked for modern apartments. The conservatives of the artistic element began, as their means permitted, to buy up the original Greenwich Village houses, restore them to their old stateliness, add modern conveniences. On paper it figured beautifully.

Interest on your cash investment and your mortgage, plus heat, plus taxes, plus a reasonable allowance for up-keep, equaled no more than the rent of a reasonably good apartment. Besides, by adding a little to your investment, you could cut the top floors into flats and make their rent help carry expenses. Perhaps it would not have turned out quite so well in practice except for one benevolent turn of fate; in three years or so, property values rose sixty to seventy-five per cent; and these pioneers gloated over their investment. Street after street passed from the shabbiness of cheap lodging-houses to its old-time stateliness. At the corner of Eleventh Street and Waverley Place—to take one example—stands the soberly beautiful old Church of St. John the Evangelist. Its pastor, Dr. John Wade, had endowment funds at his disposal. One by one, he acquired for his church the whole end of that block, including the house where dwelt the original Colonel Carter of Cartersville. These he restored, and in the area formed by their common back yards laid a beautiful and romantic bit of garden. There, through all the New York winter, stalks a flock of pheasants. Even veritable slums felt the restoring touch. Minetta Lane and Minetta Street looked, in 1921 like the illustration for an old-time tract on the Results of Rum—slimy, garbage-ridden, frequented by slinking ragamuffins. But the houses—one of them octagonal in shape—had all the soundness and romantic quality of early nineteenth-century building. There were sixteen-paned windows, the glass turning purple; there were amusing dormers with classic arch designs; there were pillared doorways opening hospitably at the street level. Three years more—and now

behold the Minettas repaired and painted and again respectable; so that the ghost of him who dwelt there in 1850 might have returned and, except for the automobiles, the costumes, and the cement pavements, observed no great change. But alas for human foresight in Manhattan! In 1927 the construction of the new Eighth Avenue subway tore down half of this pretty group and exposed the garden shamelessly to public view.

Rents went up. Drifters drifted away. And the real-estate men, leaping again to the vanguard of the times, hired all the advertising curtains at all the Village moving-picture houses to set forth the safety and bourgeois respectability of the district.

The post-war building area came on. By now, Greenwich Village was becoming so desirable that capital saw its chance. Down lower Fifth Avenue crept new and expensive apartment-houses, plowing up and throwing into the scrap-heap such landmarks as the stately old Brevoort mansion.

We were in process of transformation. But it sneaked on us so gradually that even I, whose job is watching this world, did not at first perceive the change. A young painter opened my eyes. He had inherited a little money, and thought of investing it in a New York house for home and studio.

"Well, there are a few places still to be had in the Village," I said.

"Oh, not the Village," he replied. "The Village is too darn Ritzy for me!"

This was a dash of cold water. I looked about, and perceived that in truth we were grown clean, smart, sanitized, a trifle sophisticated. Part of the True Bohemians had grown up into successful young artists who dined with the bourgeoisie. Though the cafés of the picturesque names and arty decorations kept their doors open, they were merely a variant on those up-town resorts where sports the butter and egg man. The nests of colorful little book-shops and specialty shops which lighten West Fourth Street, West Eighth Street, and Grove Street seemed to be doing well. But the atmosphere had changed; the customers were no longer picturesque, but only smart. And still—perhaps because people who prefer houses to flats are essentially individual—the district retained a quality of its own. A village set into a metropolis, you knew your next-door neighbors and gossiped over the back fence. And in the reaction toward the conventional life, it had not lost its artistic character. I catalogued my acquaintances in the four blocks surrounding my own house, and enumerated sixteen people whom critics would call first-raters in the arts. In five years, two Pulitzer prizes and one O. Henry prize for literature had rewarded inhabitants of this little acre or so, besides I know not what guerdons for music and painting. It's Ritzy art, perhaps, but still it's Art. This is the third era through which I have lived with Greenwich Village; and on the whole, I like it best.

And even if Economic Determinism, heavenly maid, had not stepped in to ruin what she wrought, I suppose the fame and infamy of Greenwich Village would have per-

ished anyway. With the end of the World War appeared the appalling and wonderful younger generation. Drop into their midst the extreme element which gave the Village its reputation in the jazz era, and no one would notice any difference. They behave too much alike!

## *Chapter XIII*

### THE VILLAGE CRAZY-QUILT

LET us now consider more in detail this district of amazing street patterns; of proportionate and comely old houses struggling for ground space with tenements; of art and literature competing for the position of leading industry with trucking, warehousing, and teaming.

The traditional start is Washington Square. Here I shall try to be brief. For no other spot in America has lived through so much description, none has served as backdrop for so many novels. Richard Harding Davis, Henry James, Edith Wharton, Brander Matthews, O. Henry—all these masters and a hundred others have set their fiction in this heart of the old city, this main ganglion of the new.

Since the early nineties, when Stanford White erected his immortal Washington Arch to mark the springing forth of Fifth Avenue, the neighborhood has changed but little; one can say this of no other important district in New York. Still across the northern side stretches the elegant, well-proportioned houses of the Knickerbocker aristocracy. Henry James, making his farewell visit to the district in which he was born, grew almost enthusiastic over this row. To him, it remained an island of sanity and



serenity in that "long, shrill city" for which he had lost his taste.

The vicissitudes of ninety years or so have even spared that Van Rensselaer mansion of the double bay-windows, the irregular outlines, and the hospitably aristocratic air at the eastern corner of Fifth Avenue. Its fellow of the opposite corner descended a few years ago to the state of apartments, but fortunately the new owners did not much alter its externals.

That part of the row which begins east of Fifth Avenue and breaks abruptly against commerce at University Place, best keeps its antique form. In a century it has altered scarcely a detail of its elegantly simple façades. Most of the windows retain the small-pane arrangement; some of the glass is tinged with that curious shade of purple which time, alone of all painters, keeps in his palette. The pillared doorways, always swept and bright; the snarling lions or crowing game-cocks on the newel-posts; the brass door-knobs shining like the sun; the varnished iron railings beside the steps; the stately lace curtains—these remain about as they were when the inhabitants of this row constituted the Irreproachable Set, when all New Year's afternoon formal carriages with starched coachmen and footmen were delivering at the carpeted entrances flaring hoop-skirts, bonnets gay with pink rosebuds, beaver hats, strapped trousers, varnished boots, and stocks.

In the period just preceding the Great War, one or two houses at the eastern end gave up the struggle against a democratic age and broke themselves up into flats. Bobby Edwards, he of the ukulele and the "Song of the Camel,"

he the cheerful embodiment of the new Greenwich Village, took up his abode in one of them. And the Jeremiahs of Washington Square foresaw the end of old North Row—its perfume of musk and patchouli blown away by the exotic complexities of modern Paris, its stately rhythms of the waltz quickened into jazz. Incidentally Bobby, having taken a lodger, found him washing underwear in the bathtub. "Out!" cried Bobby; "washery has never yet been committed in this bath-room!" But there the Bohemian invasion stopped; even though Art had turned its flank, the Old Guard dug in and held on.

As for the south side, it was never so fashionable as the north, but there are many stately houses nevertheless. Years ago the cream-colored Judson—a New York variant of Santa Maria in Cosmedin—replaced a row of old dwelling houses. It did so to the advantage of the district; it remains one of the best exteriors in modern New York. And at night its luminous cross is a beacon for the whole region. The old houses generally hold their own, though here and there studio-lights and a sheathing of cement have altered the façades.

A period still older breaks once or twice into the building-line. The crazy toy of a two-story building at Fifty-eight must go back to the days when New York hanged its murderers, robbers, and incendiaries on the square, their last sight in this world the unkempt graves of the potters' field. Until prohibition came, this housed one of the most interesting saloons in Manhattan. The next oldest inhabitant of the square, the authorities say, is the four-story building at the corner of Wooster Street. It is so narrow that its star-

headed bolts nail it like a shingle to the taller structure to the west. Restored with all its charm retained, it now serves a small club. However, until Volstead overthrew Bacchus, it, too, accommodated a saloon on the ground floor, while its upper stories served as a noisy and very gay dance-hall for the tenement population to the south.

The artistic invasion has impinged but little on the external appearance of the square proper. It is in the short and narrow streets which environ it that color blazes and jazz blares. MacDougal Alley and Washington Mews once held the stables of the queenly houses on the northern side. Art has transformed them into studios. The Mews exposes itself to the glimpsed view of every outside passenger on the Fifth Avenue stage; a gay strip of managed color wherein a bluish Chinese green predominates. MacDougal Alley, more somber in tone but lightened by statues over the doorways and ivy on the walls, hides itself from the tripper of the buses behind a bijou estate created recently in the back yard of the corner house. With its romantic outline, its ornamented stone wall, its handkerchief of formal garden, this is to me one of the most pleasing bits in New York—Beauty's Bower for an old-fashioned valentine.

Cross the square. Southward from the one-time saloon at Fifty-eight lies a little brick building which is beginning to bulge in front like an elderly gentleman growing a paunch. Here flourishes behind its futurist sign the café of that picturesque and celebrated lady, Romany Marie—not the least celebrated of the Bohemian lounging-places in that period when Greenwich Village was at the high tide of jazz and self-consciousness.

One of the dying buildings just beyond flares out a green oriel-window, very fair and proportionate, behind which nowadays a tailor may be seen pressing trousers. It was the first of the little specialty shops which did so much to brighten the quarter—the pioneer. But the location was bad; mostly the shops now flourish on the run of Eighth Street, just east of Sixth Avenue, or Fourth Street to both sides of Sixth Avenue.

They sell all the art products or near-art products of the Village; by means of them many an apprentice Lawson or Bellows keeps the pot boiling while putting the best of his energies into his unrecognized masterpieces. Batiks and hand-embroidered smocks; art jewelry; frank imitations of Navajo blankets and rings; antiques, of course, but generally minor pieces, such as Sandwich glass, tinsel pictures, or Currier and Ives prints; hand-dyed scarfs, potteries and chinaware in modernist decoration—these are their staples. All strive for an artistic interior effect. Some attain it; the failures merely achieve a pretentious “artiness.”

The book-stores, whose window displays thrust forward Theodore Dreiser, Aldous Huxley, and Ernest Hemingway at the expense of Zane Grey and Harold Bell Wright, vary their own stock with the products of the Greenwich Village artisans such as conspicuously bizarre and humorous wooden animal toys. In the days when the Village was the Village, some of these shops specialized also on socialist and communist literature. I know one rich and estimable old lady who still searches them, on behalf of her pet patriotic society, for seditious literature. She is living in the last chapter. She does not know that whereas in 1913 the illuminati of

the Village addressed their fellows as "Comrade," by 1927 they were more likely to go round giving each other the Fascist salute.

So much for the architecture and externals of the square and its environs. But novels are not made of brick and stone and glass, comely though these may be. It is the human composition of the quarter which has so inspired the artistic imagination. You see this best, I think, on a warm spring night before the old settlers of the northern rim have proceeded to their summer resort—is it still Saratoga?—and the artists to Provincetown or Woodstock.

On a bench near the arch you may behold an inconspicuously correct old lady in black silk, gazing with benevolent tolerance on the cavortings of the herd. Beside her usually sits the lady's companion who preserves her from the contacts of the presuming. And underfoot squeal and scramble the lively children of the Italian district.

Italian lovers, adoring each other with melting eyes, occupy most of the benches toward the southern rim. The young men wear invariably the loudest patterns and the latest cuts which the ready-made houses have to offer. The young women often are in transition as their means afford from the costume of Naples or Palermo to that of Fifth Avenue. For years I have kept catalogued in memory one of these combinations—a vivid blue shawl by way of head-dress, a red blouse embroidered in rosebuds, a plaid golf-skirt, high-heeled patent-leather shoes, and white kid gloves. On a favored night you may hear a band approaching on the blood-stirring beat of Garibaldi's Hymn. It heads an Italian society which arrays itself about the



statue of the Great Liberator while its leaders make speeches and hang wreaths. Once these pilgrims wore the red shirts of the Immortal Thousand; now it is the black shirt of Fascism.

On the other benches, eager and illumined youth debates on art or literature, expressionism or psychoanalysis, the dictatorship of the proletariat or the guidance of the intellectual, Glenway Westcott or Brancusi. Here, as everywhere in the city parks, is a sprinkling of those drifting paupers who live for the day and sleep sitting up, wherever the police will let them. However, in Washington Square—as fits the character of the district—both their appearance and their histories are more picturesque than usual. One, who has long since gone from Bellevue to a public grave, was both a poet of the true fire and a passable journalist. He neither drank nor took drugs; but some main thread of his fiber had snapped within him. He lived by polite beggary among the authors and painters. Fill him with coffee and he would sit for hours on the bench which was to be his bed, talking with the tongue of men and of angels. . . . And giving it all a sense of life, movement, and gaiety, the Fifth Avenue omnibuses, their upper decks full to the spilling point with ten-cent trippers, sweep rhythmically to their terminus.

I promised to touch only briefly on Washington Square; and here I have gone garrulously along, using up valuable space. . . . Now I must be swift and terse . . . the little patch of Jewish graveyard thrust, behind a stone wall, into the bulk of a department-store. . . . The department-store nearest the corner of Fourteenth Street and Fifth Avenue,



very fashionable once, then exceedingly cheap and "common"; and now, with the recrudescence of the district, growing smart again. But all this time, much of its original clientele has hung on. "We have," one of its floor-walkers boasted of late, "the biggest carriage trade in New York." He meant the phrase literally; for some of the more conservative old families still go abroad behind two spanking blacks and a cockaded coachman, still trade where mother did . . . Jefferson Market, court and jail, all in one building. In the beginning an overpretentious imitation of sixteenth-century German château architecture, it has taken picturesqueness from time, from the colorful activities of its ground story, and from the quadrilateral of old buildings which crowd it so close. To north opens both Milligan Place and Patchen Place, the first two of those interior squares, lost in a city block, whose discovery is always surprising even the habituated Greenwich Village.

Bank Street screens its eastern terminus from view of raging Seventh Avenue by a whimsical jog of the map and a new cinema theater. Because it is hard to find and because all its approaches are difficult for an automobile to navigate, this remains perhaps the least frequented street in all downtown New York. Also, it has changed the least from its old form. Along its first block, only one church and two small apartment-houses break the procession of iron half-story steps, toy front yards, recessed and pillared doorways, mansards, tiny ornamented windows peering from the attic stories. It might be a street of the gentry in some English provincial town. Behind its façades lie stately parlors of the early-Victorian period which the good taste of its restorers

has spared. Over a fence in Waverley Place one may catch a glimpse of its back yards; a jumble of sun-parlors and balconies gay with flowers. This is a writing street as MacDougal Alley a painting street; no other spot in America produces so much real literature.

Find your way a hundred yards or so down Waverley Place—by now you begin to need the map. There confronts you like a severe but tolerantly understanding conscience the Church of St. John the Evangelist, soberly beautiful behind its Grecian portico of ripened brownstone. A half-block down West Eleventh Street stands the North Baptist Church in the 1880 style. When the congregation established itself here, it was the most northerly Baptist church in Manhattan. Now it disputes with the Judson the honor of being the most southerly.

Dr. Wade of St. John's is turning the interior yards bounded by these two churches into a picturesque and restful close. As I write, he has just added two new features—a set of ornamented iron pillars acquired from a wrecked monastery in New Orleans, and an altar for out-of-door summer weddings.

This patch of Greenwich Village—Bank, West Eleventh, and Perry to the west of Seventh Avenue—has a unique history. Between 1820 and 1920 its fine residences degenerated from the state of mansions almost to that of rookeries; and then, without losing much of their original form, came back to affluence and respectability. One of the houses which Dr. Wade has reverently refurnished and added to his building scheme was known to the police not so many years ago as the Tub of Blood!

Follow the map southwestward to the corner of Hudson and Barrow streets. Hudson will become Eighth Avenue a few blocks northward; even here it is a wide main thoroughfare. Stop for a moment to contemplate old St. Luke's. Built in 1822, when New York was just beginning to discover this sleepy and tree-bowered suburb, it retains the shape and air of a village church—a sturdy and upstanding peasant, lost among a million city folk. Now turn eastward on Barrow. After half a block the street seems to divide. In reality, it is only meeting the crazy course of Commerce Street, which the artists are trying to rechristen with its original name of Cherry Lane. At the junction stand, some fifty feet apart, square, solid, tremendously self-respecting twin houses of the mansard era. In the space between lies a patch of garden, fended from the prying view of pedestrians by a brick wall of equal honesty and respectability. I can only guess at their history. Infected with the romance which hangs over the district, I like to conjecture that some father built them for the married quarters of two inseparable daughters—twins, I hope. Doubtless the triangle of tenement-houses against which they lie plastered was once their larger garden, where flourished the original cherry-trees.

Commerce Street, curving past them, takes one frightened little side-step at the southern corner. Here two houses of the earlier nineteenth century, with fronts as quaint and hospitable as any in the Village, half face each other. Next door, the transformation of a stable and a warehouse has produced the Cherry Lane Theatre. When the Guild, the Provincetown Players, and the Greenwich Village Theater came to deal with certainties, this took up the burden of

theatrical experiment. A few yards away, a gate and a dropping flight of steps break the building-line. These ascend again to a wide close, newly gardened from the back yards of Bedford Street. During the last four years this row has undergone restoration or sophisticated transformation. In the process the builders found themselves confronted with the problem of a twelve-foot gap. They solved it with a toy-house of unglazed brick, the roof-line stepped in Dutch fashion. Here until she abandoned Manhattan lived Edna St. Vincent Millay. That a girl-poet so fair and slim of person, so delicate and subtle of mind, should dwell in this elfin cot—that always struck me as the most divinely appropriate coincidence in Manhattan.

Follow Bedford Street toward the docks and the river. At the corner of Grove, marooned in a wilderness of red brick, stands a comely colonial house, ceiled over with white clap-boards. Across a patch of back yard a two-story outhouse attends it like a dory hitched to a liner. This, tradition says, was once slave-quarters to the larger house. Tradition further avers that it is the oldest existing structure in Greenwich Village. Certainly it shares with the Tom Paine house at 309 Bleeker Street and a strange little broad-eaved rookery of Weehawken Street the glory of having witnessed the Revolution.

Behind the stately antique lady of Grove Street towers in startling contrast that studio-building which a group of patrons and prominent citizens dedicated in 1925 as a Temple of the Muses. These restorers took a spindling five-story tenement, cemented over its brick-work, bulged out where cornice met roof a pagoda-like beak

of sheet-iron, painted the whole structure in dull black, ornamented it with geometric designs in green, Prussian blue, and saffron yellow. The futurists all like it. Even the classicists admit that it throws a splash of color into a rather somber district, and that it resembles no other building this side of Berlin. For variety, proceed fifty yards or so to Grove Court. By now, you are irretrievably lost; even the map will scarcely help you. You must trust to native guides. . . . This is a row of child-size houses approached through a ten-foot break in the building-line and set behind a cheerful garden. The impertinent little fronts have been dressed up during the last five years with high-colored window-sashes and shutters, figurines in niches, trailing vines. The primitive scroll-saw designs on some of the tiny piazzas are not, as would appear at first glimpse, modernist additions. They belong to the original houses.

Finally, ask the natives—always most courteous to foreigners—the way to Charlton Street. If you enter it from the Hudson Street end, pause to recognize that you are treading on historic ground—though time has granted not even the memorial of a line on a brass tablet. For here stood Richmond Hill, the most romantically beautiful of the county seats which fringed colonial New York. The memory of Washington, of John and Abigail Adams, of Lord Jeffrey Amherst blesses this spot; as that of Aaron Burr, who owned Richmond Hill in the days of its dying splendors, possibly damns it. Wide Charlton Street stretches to Varick a parade of fine, antique doorways. My favorite New York doorway decorates a house in Morton Street, just east of Hudson. However, Mr. Suydam, when I showed him my



discovery and suggested a sketch, voted in favor of the Charlton Street school. I yield to art. But if you are interested, see them soon. As I write, the wrecker is tearing into the row at the northern corner of Varick; and Charlton Street tells me that a half a dozen more on the other side are sentenced to death, so that a splendid new apartment-house may have life. Is this an omen, I wonder, for Washington Square?



## *Chapter XIV*

### GRAMERCY PARK

"A BIT of aristocratic London"—this has always served as the conventional tag for Gramercy Park. However, since the loft buildings began scraping the skies above Fourth Avenue you must in order to appreciate the comparison hold your eyes to the street level. Below—if you can blind yourself to a few apartment-houses—it is Russell Square or Bedford Square; above, is a spur of the Manhattan cordillera topped by the comely pinnacle of the Madison Square tower.

First, on the lower level of the view, you will mark the ample and well kept old mansion houses of brownstone or pinkish brick, lightened with balconies and canopies of lacy ironwork which suggest that while these habitations are eminently elegant they know also how to be gay. Then the park itself: a gardened square inclosed within by a box-hedge and without by an eight-foot iron fence whose sharp spear-heads defy climbing little boys.

Those gentle old ladies who sit in the pose of antique refinement on the benches, those children who frolic on the sanded pathways under the feet of uniformed nurses, have privileges denied to the populace. For this is the one private



GRAND CENTRAL FROM PARK AVENUE



park in New York—through periodical legal struggles with a covetous municipality has been kept so for nearly a century. It flaunts its exclusiveness by polished brass locks on all the latchet-gates. The key to Gramercy Park is, however, not such a symbol of social exclusiveness as in the old days. Of late a friendly board of trustees has extended the privilege not only to the holders of the original sixty-six lots rimming the square but to the residents of certain surrounding streets.

Once upon a time—well, Peter Cooper, inventor and philanthropist, lived a block away at Twenty-second and Lexington Avenue. He was of Gramercy Park perhaps, but not in it. When he founded Cooper Union and did his part in creating the Atlantic cable, the trustees conferred upon him as a kind of Distinguished Service Cross or Legion of Honor—the highest reward of merit in their power—a key to Gramercy Park! Nevertheless it strives still to maintain a few social barriers. A card posted inside the gates informs the guest that while members of abutting clubs may use the magic key the same privilege does not extend to their wives and families.

I have mentioned Peter Cooper, and the history of progress in this region begins when that shrewd, kindly, aspiring, and all-inventive genius bought the old Stuyvesant farm-house and moved it by ox-team to Twenty-eighth Street and Fourth Avenue. Between him and the seat of fashion in lower Second Avenue lay a picturesque knoll called Bowery Hill and a mushy morass formed by the overflow of Little Crooked Knife Brook. *Kron Mesje* was its Dutch name. Then in 1831 appeared Samuel Ruggles, who

might have advertised himself as the Realtor with a Vision. He bought this site, graded the hill into the morass, laid out the park, cut up its fringe with the sixty-six large lots aforementioned, and sold them to a very select list of customers. By the terms of the deed the square became common exclusive property of the Gramercy Park freeholders.

Peter Cooper, who had just built the first American locomotive, doubtless could not afford to come in. When his inventions began to pay—they varied from a cradle-rocker to a steel process—he built as near the park as any newcomer could get. His fine old mansion still defies time and modernity; in it still dwell his descendants of the Hewitt strain.

Before the Mexican War Gramercy Park had become the northernmost outpost of society, the heart and center being the Academy of Music on Fourteenth Street. Further—and more significantly to history—through four or five decades it housed an element for which we have no exact parallel elsewhere in America. These Gramercy Park people were an aristocracy with a hobby for intellectual activity and leadership. It seemed as though the atmosphere, so like that of fashionable London, had infected them with the responsible spirit of the British upper class. Fifth Avenue was then in process of replacing Second as the American Mayfair. And while Fifth Avenue went in for jewels, French cooks, splendid equipages, receptions, yachts, fast horses, even such new, fashionable, and fascinating diversions as croquet and archery, Gramercy Park rode on daring adventure with industry, with politics, with inquiry into the nature of things.

Just across Fourth Avenue stands the house where Theodore Roosevelt was born. The Roosevelts—geographically a little apart from the charmed inclosure—ran nevertheless with the Park set. Though the key had not been conferred upon them, it is natural to assume that they had guest privileges. And so among the ghosts that for me haunt the park is that of a chunky, near-sighted, energetic small boy who doubtless broke all his toys and clicked his teeth as he played.

At No. 15 lived and died Samuel Tilden. All Democrats in good standing believe that he, instead of Hayes, was in 1876 rightfully elected president of the United States. Across the square dwelt Abraham S. Hewitt, who managed his campaign, and David Dudley Field, whose Electoral Commission decided the issue for Hayes. For a tense fortnight many a house in Gramercy Park stood under police guard; it was the focus of a potential civil war. Even the stalwart Republicans among the old residents admire the manner in which Tilden took the blow—"like a man and a gentleman." He refused to tear open old wounds by any form of public protest; he turned to the end a smiling face on his world.

Three times the square and its immediate environs have displayed the twin lamps maintained unto perpetuity by the city at the gate of his Honor the Mayor—for Edward Cooper and Abraham S. Hewitt, respectively son and son-in-law of Peter Cooper, and for James Harper, founder of the publishing house. Hewitt was not merely mayor of New York. For vastness of variety his activities almost matched those of his father-in-law. He led the famous revolt



against Tammany. He gave liberally to Cooper Union. And as minister to Turkey he enjoyed the friendship of the sultan himself.

Two Episcopal bishops, Potter of the New York diocese, and Satterlee, of the Washington, derived from Gramercy Park. From a house at the southwestern corner, now replaced by apartments, Potter governed his diocese, as did Bishop Greer. In the row of houses running eastward from Irving Place, John Bigelow, great editor, great diplomat, and great person, lived out his ninety years. James W. Gerard, our fighting ambassador to Germany during the European stage of the Great War, was born in the row beside the Tilden house.

But for the frank expression of his unconventional views on religion, Robert Ingersoll might at least have been candidate for the presidency. His solid mid-Victorian mansion, with its furnishings of plush, carved wood, horsehair, and gilt picture-frames, remained until the third decade of this century much as he left it. Then—an apartment-house again. There the great skeptic held forth to his entranced dinner-parties. "When Robert Louis Stevenson talked," says one who has sat under them both, "the air was full of flaming swords. When Bob Ingersoll talked, the day broke over the mountains." But conversation dies with its beggetter, and this age tends to rate oratory, even when it has the ring and inspiration of Ingersoll's, as bunk. He lives in fame to-day only as the noble ideal of the agnostics and the awful example of the fundamentalists.

Then there was the affair of the Atlantic cable. Cyrus K. Field, I believe, conceived the daring project; he and

Peter Cooper fought it through. Field lived at the eastern corner of Lexington Avenue in a house which Stanford White afterward transformed into an Italian palace. Now a big apartment-house holds the site. History gives most of the credit to Field. But it was Cooper who, when the dumb contraption spluttered eight hundred words and stopped, set out to run down the source of trouble. In mid-ocean a strand of wire had pushed clear through the gutta-percha sheathing—which was theoretically impossible. "Something," said the Yankee intelligence of Cooper, "is wrong with the sheathing at this point." He consulted the manufacturers in New Jersey; by subtle questioning he got the important fact he wanted. On one very hot day the machinery had broken down, and a length of the Atlantic cable had broiled for twelve hours in a temperature of 100 degrees. This discovery turned the Atlantic Cable Company from an expensive joke to a triumph; presently, by the crude, old-fashioned device of wires, we were talking to London.

Let me stop the catalogue here; let me only say that a gossip of Manhattan, showing a country cousin over Gramercy Park in the seventies and eighties, would at every other door drop into awed ears the name and title of some national celebrity.

A lifelong resident has told me how it all looked in those, its great days. "That row on the western side—omitting the apartment-house—is most typical," he said. "Only you must throw in a few brownstone fronts like the existing Hewitt house on the northern side. In the fifties or sixties some one was permitted to build the Gramercy Park

House along the whole eastern side. When that big white apartment-house there replaced it—we used at first to call that ‘the wedding cake,’ but we rather like it now—the builders didn’t need the last lot to the north. So they sawed the old hotel off right there. The building on the corner of Twenty-first Street is simply the end tier of the Gramercy Park House.

“Southerners always favored this hotel. After the Civil War it was headquarters for the planters. They wore broad hats and long frock-coats—like your mental picture of Colonel Carter of Cartersville. They used to sit in rocking-chairs on the piazza with their feet elevated—it might have been Macon or Mobile. In those days the slaughter-houses stood at the end of Lexington Avenue. The stockmen landed the herds of wild Texas longhorns somewhere on East River and drove them north by way of the park. Two policemen always came along five minutes ahead of the herds to see that women and children kept indoors. But we boys would get the key and rush to the inclosure of the park for a grand-stand view. Cowboys drove them—real cowboys in sombreros and chaps, the first we’d ever seen. It was better than a circus parade.

“One day a bull escaped from the herd. Somehow the cowboys didn’t miss him; the herd went on up Lexington Avenue. The poor bewildered brute began rushing down the pavements round the park inclosure, charging everything he saw. A policeman jumped in with his revolver and shot him four or five times—in the wrong place, I suppose, because it only stirred him up. Then one of the planters—I learned afterward that he was a Texan—rose from his

rocking-chair, sauntered out on to the pavement, and said to the policeman, 'Here, let me in!' Just then the bull charged again. The Texan side-stepped, grabbed his tail, gave it some peculiar twist which threw him, caught hold of one horn, drew a bowie-knife from his own hip-pocket, and cut the bull's throat. As he strolled back to his rocking-chair, wiping his knife, he said to the policeman, 'Friend, you needn't waste a bullet to kill a bull.'

"Up Lexington Avenue just beyond Twenty-fourth Street stood the horse market of New York. It's there yet, for that matter; but of course, it has no longer much importance. As yet there was no car-line on the avenue. It was a fine, broad, open boulevard, and the dealers used it to speed their fancy carriage-horses when showing them off to customers. Just so often a blooded horse, racing southward, would run away or get out of control. And right ahead the park fence closed the street. The pavement before Gramercy Park North is so narrow that you can't possibly turn into it on any pace faster than a walk. So a runaway always meant a tragedy for the horse and the driver or both. I suppose that half a dozen men were killed in these smash-ups. Often the horse would break clear through the fence. You can still see on the north gate the bolts and splices where the palings have been patched."

There they are, as I saw for myself later. And the marks of these old disasters recalled a famous tragedy of Gramercy Park to which I was almost a witness. It happened not twenty paces away from the battered north gate. In the days when I first knew this district intimately, the clubs were beginning to invade its select quadrangle. Stanford White's

residence, just east of the avenue, had been made over for the Princeton Club. One afternoon I skirted the square in a hurry to keep an engagement. There was a crowd before the Princeton Club, and two policemen were guarding a human form under a white sheet.

"The guy down there has just bumped a man and blew his own brains," volunteered a loafer. I had no time to learn more. Ten minutes later a friend burst into the room where I was sitting and cried:

"Graham is dying—David Graham Phillips—shot—"

An odd affair, this Phillips murder; just a case of bad, black luck. What with the Players, the National Arts, and half a dozen collegiate clubs, Gramercy Park was then perhaps the literary center of America. And to a lodging overlooking all this had come an incipient lunatic with literary ambitions. His manuscripts—the trail of insanity over them—returned regularly from the magazines. In nine cases out of ten paranoia first manifests itself in a mania of persecution. This poor boy ran true to form; he began imagining a gigantic conspiracy to keep his work out of print.

Phillips was tall and handsome in a curious irregular way; also, he had a taste for noticeable patterns in clothes. Physically, indeed, he was one of the most conspicuous men in New York. But for that circumstance Tarkington, Garland, McCutcheon, or any of the other eminent writing men who frequented the park in those days might have drawn the black spot. For the lunatic's eye, which he took for his mind, fixed itself on the conspicuous form of Phillips. Ah, this was the leader of the conspiracy, the chief of his tormentors!



Phillips beat the New York game by keeping curious hours. He went to work at midnight, knocked off and turned in at six in the morning, and emerged to public view in the early afternoon. He began that day as usual by strolling over to the Princeton Club for his mail. In his box he found a telegram reading, "David Graham Phillips—you will be shot to-day—David Graham Phillips." He shook his head over it; laughed, started down the front steps. A man who had been pacing up and down before the club wheeled suddenly and poured four bullets from an automatic into his head and chest.

That club era began in the eighties and nineties. Already some of the old families had died out or found it necessary to move away. And in the early years of this century the great Metropolitan Life Building rose at the corner of Twenty-third Street. It seemed to spawn lofts and office-buildings; they spread north and south over all Fourth Avenue. Once a fashionable promenade, that thoroughfare now ran brimful with the noontime strolling of stenographers and needle-workers. Long since, the elevated had cast its blight on Third Avenue. Trucks jammed the cross streets. Clubs began taking over the old mansions. Then the clubs also moved northward to hotel-like sky-scrapers—with four exceptions. The Players, the National Arts, the Netherlands, and the Technology are hanging on, and two of these seem to be permanencies.

The Players was the pioneer. In the last decade of his life Edwin Booth bought the Hall residence at number 16, gave Stanford White a commission to make it over, endowed it, presented it as a club to practitioners of his own



art and the other arts. There he lived the rest of his days. The Players preserve his room as a shrine; on the table lies a book of poems still open at the page where he was reading when the bolt from heaven struck him. To this, his dear hobby, Booth gave his discriminating collection of theatrical prints, playbills, paintings, and books. By gift and bequest friends and members have swelled the collection until now it stands alone in America for completeness and importance. Recently the art committee, taking stock, made a number of important discoveries, including a Gilbert Stuart portrait set down for nearly a century as lost!

Stanford White undertook with zeal and enthusiasm his job of revamping. That master of architectural detail has fared as unluckily in the permanence of his work as he did in the manner of his death. The Parkhurst church, with its romantic classicism, and old Madison Square Garden, with its airy flight have surrendered to the wrecker; the Herald Building is irreparably mutilated. Besides the Washington Arch, two remaining interiors perhaps represent him best. The Harvard Club shows what he could do with a free hand; the Players, his talent as an adapter. Of his mantel in the lounging-room of the Players, a critic has said, "It has but one fault; it is too nearly perfect."

When the Players came, the social distinction of Gramercy Park was in its late blooming. Another kind of fashionable district might have resented this intrusion of mere artists, but not Gramercy Park; it thrilled ever to intellect. Also there was Booth coming to dwell among them, and Booth was a kind of superman. And now the trustees have moved eastward the old Ceres or Diana or Vesta—or who-

ever she is—which formerly crowned the fountain at the center of the park, to make room for Quinn's portrait-statue of Booth as Hamlet. The Players gave it, and John Drew—no less—made the speech of dedication.

The National Arts came later. It revamped the Tilden mansion at Number Fifteen and raised on Nineteenth Street a tall addition to serve as living quarters. This is one of the few New York clubs open to both sexes; in which concession to modern custom the metropolis lags somewhat behind the back country. When the author or painter of Chicago or Cleveland, Gloucester or Taos, visits New York, it is odds on that you can run him—or her—to earth at the National Arts. Its art and book exhibitions have become almost municipal institutions; gradually it is acquiring a first-class collection of modern American painting.

But the Tildens are gone now and the Potters; the Fishes, the Gerards, the Bayards, the Ingersolls, the Fields. Others, however, still cling to the soil in which they took root nearly a century ago—as Hewitts, Coopers, Bigelows, Vanderpools, and Schieffelins. "While a single member of our family is alive and solvent," says one of these immovable citizens, "he will stick to Gramercy Park."

## *Chapter XV*

### SECOND AVENUE

LOWER Second Avenue, between its rise in Houston Street and its emergence into Stuyvesant Square, has fulfilled the wish which—women say—every school-girl confides to her diary. It has known all the human experiences. This little Broadway of the East Side has in its day endured the pioneer struggle against wild beasts and wilder Indians, dodged the bullets of an invading army, enjoyed the peace of a prosperous farming community, risen to a new wealth from which it scaled the heights of fashion and social exclusiveness; then declined to plain bourgeois, respectability, dropped rapidly to poverty, degradation, and crime; finally climbed slowly backward to rehabilitation. Even in this century, it has lived through one of the most heartrending disasters in American history, has steeled itself against picturesque but sinister banditry, has witnessed the rise and fall of a strange and interesting foreign Tenderloin, has nurtured the rise of countless undaunted souls from the obscurity of the steerage to standing and prosperity.

It has harbored, too, every human element which made the American of to-day and is making the American of to-morrow. All the white races have surged across it in waves:

Nordic, Alpine, Latin, Semitic, Slavic; the original Holland Dutch, the colonial English, Irish, Germans, Hungarians, Poles, Russian and Rumanian Jews, finally pure Slavic Russians from the land of the czars and its borders. For all these, lower Second Avenue and its environs have served but for a temporary abiding-place. As one wave of immigration rolled on northward, another splashed in on its wake. But each has left behind its back-wash—a few families who, tired of trekking, have here rooted themselves in the soil. There is even a tiny American colony! So the region has become a racial mosaic; and no thoroughfare this side of the *Cannebière* in Marseilles presents to the beholder so much raw and merry life, such engaging variety of racial type, as lower Second Avenue.

Also, each era of its last hundred and fifty years stands represented still by some bit of its characteristic architecture. Toward the northern boundary of the district rises St. Mark's in the Bouverie, erected when Washington had just begun his second term; next to City Hall our best exemplar of the "colonial" style. On a corner near the southern boundary, a small modern office-building with a steel skeleton seems absolutely to tower. Between these extremes lies every type of façade: pillared doorways and ornamented cornices; mansards and iron balconies; ponderous trimmings and cushions of unfaced stone—the brands and trade-marks respectively of 1830, 1860, 1880.

An old business block tall for its period, and St. Augustine's, a large institutional church, run along East Houston Street to seal the southern end. Here the sides of the avenue flare out a little to accommodate the oblique entrance of

Chrystie Street with its procession of tenements, its endless lattice of fire-escapes flaunting the family wash. The effect is of a little, intimate, and very gay square. St. Augustine's had the misfortune to be built or rebuilt in the eighties; its façade therefore plays those tricks with stone which that blind age admired. However, by some freak of taste the builders finished it with a tall and simple campanile rising from the rear of its mass. On moonless nights, the shadows from the violent electric lights of the burlesque shows round the square blot out the details and reveal only its imposing bulk. The tower and cross become then shadows against the rose-shot night skies of New York, like Conscience haunting Pleasure. Seen in exactly the proper light and mood, this is to me one of the most beautiful and suggestive bits of New York.

All evening long the little Square quivers with life. Four or five burlesque shows or musical comedies run constantly, besides I know not how many cinemas. The electric signs, which concede nothing for brilliance to Times Square, display strange Slavonic names of authors, composers, and stars as well known to the East Side as Eugene O'Neill, Irving Berlin, and Claire Eames to Broadway. Between the theaters lie on the street level Rumanian restaurants, Jewish restaurants, Russian restaurants; hose and glove and slip-on shops only a degree less alluring to the feminine eye than those of Broadway; photograph galleries whose displays specialize on stiff and proud wedding parties or dark and awed little girls in their first communion robes; book-stores which offer highly colored periodicals in half a dozen alphabets.



In the tangle of heterogeneous buildings above flourish certain enterprises less openly approved by the police. The sport of the East Side must risk a few dollars now and then at stuss, or he knows not content. Gone, it is true, are Monk Eastman, Humpty Jackson, and popular Big Jack Selig; two of them by gunshot wounds at the hand of a person or persons unknown. Gone also are the gangs of pickpockets and loft robbers, whose doings sprinkled the front pages fifteen or twenty years ago. In these days their operations would have small chance for newspaper space beside those of the Broadway bandit with his Fifth Avenue wardrobe, his short but merry life in the night clubs, and his raids on the diamonds of rich, vain, and careless ladies. The somewhat pale and decadent gang which still infest the Second Avenue district, imagine no operation more daring than holding up a stuss game for the winnings. Their steady income they derive from protecting gambling-houses, black-mailing small tradesmen, or bootlegging in a modest way.

But on Second Avenue, as on Broadway, the underworld is only the underworld, a trifling detail in the whole picture. Of evenings when the crowds stream to the picture-shows, the musical comedies, the grand balls of this or that society, club, lodge, or union, the prevailing note is innocent and excited gaiety. They are hard-working people down in this corner of our town; the composite expression in this well won hour of leisure and pleasure conveys much more delighted anticipation than that of the pampered up-town theatrical crowds.

And what faces they have; what diversity of type; here and there, what beauty! An Italian girl descends from a



taxicab in a whirl of gestures and pink skirts. Replace with white woolen draperies her \$10.99 evening-dress, her coat with the near-ermine collar, her cheap red hat, and you have the young Juno. Siegfried of the curling blond beard and the high, straight brow herds ahead of him into the picture-show his brood of young German-Americans. Rachel of the creamy skin hangs confidently to the arm of her escort, her liquid, wistful eyes belying the expression of girl-on-a-holiday about her mouth.

St. Augustine's Church is now the focus for our newest and most romantic foreign wave. In one of its chapels I saw during Lent of 1927 a bearded Russian priest superintending its transformation into a church of the orthodox Greek faith. For in this region settled after the war the refugees of the old czarist régime—noblemen and broken capitalists, lawyers, physicians, teachers, all by a fantastic stroke of fate reduced to poverty and manual labor. New York would have heard more about this element, I suppose, but for one governing trait in the mystical Slav nature—an Oriental talent for resignation. The calamity is the will of God; one shuts his lips and goes on.

The scion of a very great Russian title arrived here penniless. A Russian-American mechanic born a serf on his father's estates gave him the fifty dollars which the immigration authorities require as a proof of self-dependence. Having some skill with his hands, he found a job at carpentry. He married an American woman and has of late branched out into a small contracting business. Until two years ago, a man who was once procurator of Russia—equivalent to our solicitor-general—served as a dish-washer





ST. MARK'S-IN-THE-BOUWERIE

in a Seventh Avenue hotel. One day he tried to thrash the foreman and lost his job. Since then he has passed out of my ken. The Russian physicians found it impossible to practise here without passing the state medical examinations, which meant special study equivalent to going to school again. They took as a body to house-painting! And for a time the graves in one of our great cemeteries were dug by Russian lawyers.

Proceed a few blocks north, turn to the right, and stop on the up-town side of Sixth Street, before an old brick church which presents to the world a solid, unlighted front like that of certain lodge buildings. It recalls a tragedy which changed the whole human complexion of the region.

At the beginning of the twentieth century German population ran along both sides of Second Avenue from East Houston Street to Twenty-third. Long before, they had pushed the Irish eastward. Social life, for the Protestants among them, centered around St. Mark's Church. On June 15, 1904, St. Mark's held its annual Sunday-school picnic. Two thousand people, mostly little children, started up the Sound in that crazy old piece of tinder, the *General Slocum*. Off Blackwell's Island she caught fire forward. The captain ran full speed ahead for land. The wind her speed created blew a sheet of flame back to her very rudder-post. . . . A thousand died by burning or drowning.

Is it egotistical to thrust my own personality into this tale of horror? But the *Slocum* disaster was my introduction to New York, and I have always thought it strange that a city which has given me so much happiness should have worn when she welcomed me so tragic a mask. I ar-

rived that morning from San Francisco with an offer from the New York "Sun" in my pocket. At Grand Central Terminal I read the head-lines and rushed to the shop. And so I began my first New York job; assigned to St. Mark's Parish.

There followed four days in an atmosphere more poignantly tragic than any other I have ever breathed, even during the Great War. Stacks of coffins on the sidewalks; half the passers-by weeping; six or eight knots of crape on every tenement door; hearses choking the street; a prostrated family surrounding four drenched little bodies laid out on a bed—for the supply of coffins had run out. Every hour or so I must need pass from the church to a building at the rear where a committee was keeping check on the latest arrivals from Bellevue Morgue. Somewhere behind a window above, a girl was crying. It seemed to me that for four days she never stopped. Her voice had an odd, catarrhal tone. In the second day I crossed the area behind the church no more, but went clear round the block; and to this day, whenever I hear that tone in a woman's voice, the world goes for an instant a little black.

The burials over, the Germans moved away—mostly to Harlem. The Irish—themselves hard hit by the *Slocum*—followed. The Semites stepped into their place; and after they too began to drift away, came the Slavs.

Let us go on to more cheerful memories. Two blocks north on Second Avenue, St. Mark's in the Bouwerie recalls the old social glories of this district. Here, as soon as the Indians left, doughty Peter Stuyvesant took up his farm and established his country place; and here for nearly two cen-

turies the Stuyvesants were lords of the land. About them grew up Bouwerie Village, which the city incorporated in 1807. Before then the Stuyvesants' own village church, this same St. Mark's, had passed into possession of Trinity Parish. The spire and the broad portico were added somewhat less than a hundred years ago. It imitates, frankly, the post-conflagration churches with which Sir Christopher Wren sprinkled London. Indeed, what with its portico, its arched windows, the shape of its churchyard and its dignified monuments, it reminds me always of St. Martin's in the Fields where Nell Gwyn lies.

Perhaps an architect might criticize the breadth of its main mass in proportion to that of its spire. I like that flaw myself; it gives St. Mark's a maternal amplitude, as of Mother Church brooding her souls. Recently a coat of pinkish cement, a dim, symbolic decoration over the portico and flower-boxes along the cornices have somewhat changed its external appearance. One dislikes to see such a fine old landmark mutilated even to its improvement. But I must admit that St. Mark's, in its present dress, gives a gay note to the whole surrounding district. Here lies Peter Stuyvesant. By the deed of gift the Stuyvesants have even to this day burial privileges in St. Mark's.

When he took up his farm Peter planted a pear, longest-lived of domestic trees—"so that there will be something to remember me by," he said. He lacked conceit and the gift of prophecy. Though the pear-tree lived two hundred years, the fame of its planter has survived longer than that. But then, he was fortunate in the eminence or prominence of his descendants and in having Washington Irving for his whim-



sical biographer. At the eastern end of the portico his bust crowns a bronze tablet whereon stand recorded his services to New Amsterdam and New York; and a memorial window marks his grave.

The corner house at Second Avenue and Eleventh Street used to be the Rutherfurd mansion. Four stories of brick and iron work, it has not changed externally since the early decades of the nineteenth century, when it was the heart and center of fashion in Manhattan. Internally—but here again I will obtrude my personality. Long ago, some one bought it from the Rutherfurds and cut it up into flats. I first saw the house from the inside when the late Walter Weyl invited me to dinner. His apartment on the second floor was the old “state suite” of the mansion. I fell in love with it on sight, swore that I would rather live there than anywhere else in New York. In December, 1916, I was preparing to return very weary from two strenuous years in Europe; the war, I thought, was over for me. And a relative who knew my obsession telegraphed me saying that the former Weyl apartment was to let. I secured it at once. When I had installed my colonial furniture among its antique glories, I said to my family, “Here we stick!”

What a place it was—formal, very formal, and yet eminently human and livable. The doors appeared to have been sawed from solid slabs of mahogany. The knobs and sconces—in fact, all the metals—were of Sheffield plate. There were two great crystal chandeliers; in years of chasing after American furniture and furnishings I have never seen their equal. Some hand too cunning for an American’s in that period had carved the great marble mantelpiece—Cupid

shooting a dart into the white breast of Venus. On two sides ten-foot French windows rose from the floor. To render them safe, there projected outside little balconies guarded and roofed with iron grill-work.

Somewhat indiscreetly, as it turned out, I began feeding from these balconies the English sparrows of St. Mark's churchyard. And soon sleep in the early morning became difficult. From peep of dawn a bread-line of these blunt and truculent Britons sat along the rails, asking in loud and insolent tones why the blazes I didn't get up and contribute. I found myself declining invitations—and especially on Sunday afternoon—just to sit and watch through those windows the spirited panorama of Second Avenue. At any hour of the day or night, it seemed to me, you could see a wedding party, a funeral, a fire, or a fight.

Less than three months of that, and Germany declared unlimited submarine warfare. We were in it now! As I was packing to return to France, arrived a notice of dispossession. A hospital had bought the Rutherford mansion, proposed to remodel its interior. Such is the vanity of human foresight, especially in New York. When I saw the house again, the head of an iron cot stared at me through one of those French windows in my old apartment. I have always wondered who got the sconces and the chandeliers.

In the early years of the nineteenth century the list of pew-holders in St. Mark's in the Bouwerie was synonymous with the roster of the socially elect. About it stretched fine old mansions; of these, the shell of the Rutherford house is the sole remaining exemplar. A woman from one of the Knickerbocker families tells me that a ring of real-estate

operators brought upon this district its ultimate downfall. As the young people of the smart set married, they desired to set up mansions of their own; in those days, that was the only way for a gentleman to live. But speculators had bought up the surrounding properties and, trading on the desirability of the district, were holding out for prices which the young people, just starting in life, could not meet. Just before this the municipality had moved away the potter's field and the town gallows from Washington Square. Here was a park as fine and wide as Stuyvesant Square, opening into an avenue as broad as Second. The young married set began building up Fifth Avenue. As the parent stock of Second Avenue and St. Mark's Place died out, none rose to take its place. Though some of the old families lingered on as late as the eighties, soon after the Civil War the emigration of fashion was virtually complete.

## *Chapter XVI*

### STUYVESANT SQUARE

IF Gramercy Park is—or was—a bit of London set into Manhattan, Stuyvesant Square, only four blocks away to the southeast, is a fragment of old, sedate Philadelphia.

Of course the Quaker meeting-house—red and white, spick and span, chastely colonial, haloed with ineffable peace—makes this comparison obvious. But you could block the meeting-house out of the picture and still have the City of Brotherly Love. The new apartments which are transforming or mutilating Gramercy Park have not yet spread across Third Avenue. So, just as in many a park of Philadelphia, the rim of Stuyvesant Square presents to the world low rows of respectable, complacent, three-story-and-basement residences or flat-houses with high, exclusive stoops and well scrubbed little areaways. Those taller structures which alone break the line are hospitals. In courtesy to them, the city forbids heavy traffic and all other causes of excessive noise in this zone. And so the wayfarer, after crossing the clang, roar, and bustle of Third Avenue, comes out on Stuyvesant Square into an island of stillness. This, too, recalls that city ninety miles to the south toward which the soul of the noise-

weary New Yorker turns now and then as toward the Heavenly Peace.

Like Second Avenue, Stuyvesant Square and the region running from it to Gramercy Park has been in its time a little of everything. Before an accident of the real-estate business shifted from Second Avenue to Fifth the original Smart Set of Manhattan, the square scarcely existed at all except on paper; the history of St. George's Church records that when in the forties the congregation moved up to that suburb, you could look unimpeded clear to the East River.

Certain offshoots of the fashionable families settled presently in the surrounding streets—like Stuyvesant Place, Rutherford Place, and Irving Place across Third Avenue. The square became so smart that for a time it kept itself a private park, like Gramercy. This passed; for a wave of German immigrants had taken over lower Second Avenue, were increasing and rolling on northward with the arrival of every Hamburg steamer. By the nineties the last of the old settlers had given it up. J. Pierpont Morgan, the elder, was among the hardy souls who long tried to stick it out; and when finally he moved to Murray Hill he left his works behind. In fact, nothing in New York, not even his unique library on Murray Hill, is so pregnant with souvenirs of that king among American financiers as Stuyvesant Square.

These memories center mostly about that distinguished row of buildings which fill the two blocks at the western side of the square. First, the Quaker meeting-house aforesaid, with its red bricks, its white trim and its cropped lawn; then across Sixteenth Street the massive bulk of twin-towered St. George's, one of the largest churches in New York and not



IN RUTHERFORD PLACE, STUYVESANT SQUARE





the least impressive; then, finishing out the row, three well kept houses from the best days of the square. St. George's, what with the institutions it has been gathering unto itself, seems almost to fill the whole block between Sixteenth Street, Seventeenth Street, the square, and Third Avenue. And between its nave and its outhouses, such as the parsonage and the Boys' Club, lies its own trim and refreshing bit of lawn.

Morgan had joined this church on his removal from Hartford to New York, was a warden long before he moved uptown. In the meantime, the foreign wave was rolling on; the whole character of the region had changed. And in the eighties there came to St. George's as pastor that attractive Irishman, Dr. Rainsford. Beholding the signs of the times, he persuaded the vestry to abolish pew-holding, make it a free church; and he began building up those institutional features for the comfort of the middle East Side which distinguish it even to this day. Dr. Reiland, the present incumbent, carries on. But there was something about St. George's—or perhaps about Dr. Rainsford and Dr. Reiland—which held the loyalty of the old parishioners. Though they had moved out of the parish, they kept up their membership and their attendance. To this day, R. Fulton Cutting and George W. Wickersham are wardens. And Morgan, when he was in New York, never missed a Sunday.

The age of heroes is past. No one man in Wall Street—nay, no ten men—can ever again seem such a king of finance as did Morgan in his time. Tourists used to attend St. George's not so much for the good of their souls as to behold the spectacle of Morgan passing the plate. Myself, I have stood more than once with the crowd which gathered

on the sidewalks to watch him emerging from Sunday morning services. For all his bulk, he seemed almost to scurry; this was one of the moments in his life when he stood unguarded against news photographers, for whom he had a constitutional aversion, and from the innumerable company trying to approach him with business propositions.

For he had cultivated or acquired a reputation as the hardest man in New York to get at. And so many wanted to get at him! All captains of finance are troubled with salesmen for financial propositions. But Morgan was also the most famous collector of his time. Paintings, books, porcelains, manuscripts—it came about that any one possessing a valuable antique tried first for Morgan. "Rushing J. Pierp" became more than a business proposition; it was a popular sport, wherein the mere fact of success meant more than the stake.

Diagonally across the square rises one of the famous Morgan philanthropies, the Lying-In Hospital. Sinking for a moment into statistics, this institution, with its wards and its out-patient departments, superintends seven per cent of the birth in Greater New York, and notwithstanding that it deals mainly with the poor, is making records in low mortalities. An eminent physician has told us lately that the hope of the next generation lies in the care which New York gives to its prospective mothers. In this work the Morgan Maternity Hospital—so the city persists in calling it—was a pioneer. Rich as well as poor have for a generation availed themselves of its facilities; in adjoining wards the babies of First Avenue and Fifth Avenue have come into the world. It seems a permanency on its present site; and I look for-

ward to the day when bronze tablets recording the birth of the great and famous will sheathe its front like plate-armor.

It has gathered to itself a notable following. In the square itself and in the surrounding streets stand a score of hospitals, varying in expense of service from the free cancer clinic to certain exclusive little "nursing homes" and in size from small ten-bed affairs created by the transformation of old private houses to that ten-story structure, still unoccupied, which fills the whole eastern side of the square.

That unbroken row of old brownstone houses running straight from the corner of Second Avenue to Third Avenue tells all the story of the square. At first they housed the aristocracy. Then descending a notch financially and rising many notches intellectually, they held a literary colony, of whom the best remembered are Brander Matthews and H. C. Bunner. Next came the more prosperous among the immigrant Germans and their second generation. Followed the period when Charlie Murphy lived in the self-effacing house near the Second Avenue corner; and now is the day of the doctors. Every door along this row bears one or more scoured and polished brass plates; and the names prove that these latest tenants represent all the racial elements of Manhattan.

It is the day of Tammany that I remember best. Even yet high chiefs of the Wigwam much inhabit this region. For they must be of the people. Even when they get up in the world they dare not move into duplex apartments on Park Avenue. That would be putting on airs. Stuyvesant Square, with its quiet, its pleasant view of big elm-trees and box-hedges, its modest old houses behind whose severe

fronts you may introduce secretly what modern luxuries you will—that is a convenient compromise. And in the first decade of the century when Charlie Murphy stood at the height of his long career, this region virtually ruled the city. You might have known that by one sign: half an hour after snow began to fall, scrapers and sweepers were at work along this modest row; before Fifth Avenue or Broadway felt the touch of a shovel, North Stuyvesant Square was as clean as a whistle. To do him justice, I suppose that Charlie Murphy never ordered this; the boys knew on which side their bread was buttered.

However, the heart of Tammany was not here. Walk three blocks up Second Avenue; at the northwest corner stands a three-story building which housed a family two generations ago. There is a candy store and soda fountain on the ground floor. The two rows of windows above, with their lace curtains and their bright boxes of geraniums, still seem to prove domestic occupancy. The street door bears simply a brass plate with the legend "Mail." Peer impudently through the glass panel and you see dimly another brass plate with the legend "Anawanda Club." Under such Indian names and primitive devices of privacy does mysterious Tammany camouflage its headquarters in the various election districts. Here, in the days when Murphy was leader, stood the throne; here "Big Chief sat in his tepee, cheering braves to victory." The Anawanda Club, I understand, is very important still, but the throne has moved on to the Twelfth District, in Chelsea Village.

Charlie Murphy held his public levees at Allaire's, known otherwise as Sheffel Hall, on Third Avenue. This

was a combination of German beer garden and restaurant which rambled through the first and second floors of two old buildings. Drained of its beer, it still serves as a restaurant. It was the center of gossip and of life for Charlie Murphy's little parish. William Sydney Porter (O. Henry) once had his impermanent abode in Irving Place. During that period he haunted Allaire's. Touches and fragments of the place run through his New York stories. And in Allaire's Murphy established himself every afternoon behind an untasted glass of beer. At once, those who had business with the Boss filled up the adjoining tables. One by one they seated themselves beside him, whispered in his ear. No matter how startling their news or how urgent their pleas, the compact, powerful head and face of Charlie Murphy never betrayed surprise by nod or shift in expression. The tale finished, he revealed in his smile of dismissal that inner humanity which made him Grand Sachem; and the next in line darted forward for more whispering.

O. Henry witnessed these sessions. And that unparalleled imagination of his, which used to pluck stories out of the empty air, must have felt itself stirred to creation. As I watched Murphy my own slower imagination tried to construct the motives and situations behind these whispered confidences. A plea for a relative caught in the toils of the law—mercy or bail. "He's really a good boy, you know, Charlie. But he got to running around to them pool-rooms." A bid for a job. A warning that Casey or Schmitz or Rosenthal "wasn't right." A report on the latest Republican plot. . . . The session at Allaire's finished, the Chief started toward Fifth Avenue. Sometimes petitioners who could not



find space at the adjacent tables used to buttonhole him for a block down the street. He was proceeding to Delmonico's, where he would hold whispering sessions with the agents of the Greater Powers. The Tenth District never quite approved of these levees at Delmonico's. They seemed faintly but perilously undemocratic.

One incident which happened during my tenancy of the district illuminates the methods by which Murphy held his power. I digress to say that I have hitherto ignored a little island of the arts lying between Stuyvesant Square and Gramercy Park. East Nineteenth Street, from Irving Place to Third Avenue, is a solid row of studios created from old family houses. The artistic occupants have embellished the outsides as their taste and fancy dictated with window-boxes, with imaginative doorways, with niches holding engagingly grotesque statues. I commend especially the charming treatment of two little buildings, formerly stables, near the northern corner of Nineteenth Street and Irving Place. To the romantic eye this is perhaps the most charming block in New York. The occupants, prosperous painters and architects, have christened it Pomander Walk by way of making the women's magazines stop calling it the Street Beautiful.

The corresponding block of East Eighteenth Street has no such façades, but its literary and artistic traditions are almost as strong. Here stand some of the oldest apartment-houses in New York.

Well, a house in this row caught fire in the small hours of morning, a swift conflagration which ran like mercury through halls and stairways. The inmates escaped with

ulsters and overcoats over their night-clothes, and almost to a man and woman in their bare feet. It was a cold winter night. The police woke the porter of a Third Avenue saloon, into which they herded the men or carried the women. But the floors were ice-cold; some of our leading authors and painters danced like dervishes to ward off chilblains.

Suddenly the door flew open, and two men entered carrying bundles and bales of brand-new woolen socks, golf-hose, and bed-slippers. It was long before the beneficiaries learned who did them this kindness. Charlie Murphy had followed the fire-engines, as he often did. When the shivering inmates came out into the cold he grasped the situation at a glance. He proceeded with a pair of his henchmen to the nearest furnishing store, broke it open by force and violence, gathered up all the wool footwear in sight, left his I.O.U. and sent these comforts by other hands to the refugees. And he never told. There you have Tammany's secret; the human touch which makes it the despair of reformers.

## *Chapter XVII*

### THE ELDER BROADWAY

ALL these centuries Broadway—I mean not the actual and physical street but the state of mind—has been creeping up town. It has advanced haltingly, jerkily. Sometimes for a decade or even a half-century it has stopped and localized itself about one square or corner, then taken a spurt and advanced ten blocks in as many years.

During the early nineteenth century, for example, it radiated from guarded oil-lamps the gaiety of at least a half-dozen theaters and museums at a stance below City Hall Park. Jump—and that district, which was the pride of the city, the thrill of the provinces, and the horror of the puritanical, impinged on Union Square. A. T. Stewart's unprecedentedly huge dry-goods emporium established itself at Ninth Street; two or three blocks northward rose Grace Church, which for a long time rivaled Trinity in fashion and fame. New Yorkers used to attend Denman Thompson's "Old Homestead," the "Abie's Irish Rose" of its day, just to behold that scene where the wayward girl is found dying in the snow with Grace Church, all lighted up, on the back-drop.

The Academy of Music, home of opera and predecessor



FOURTEENTH STREET



of the Metropolitan, stood at Irving Place and Fourteenth Street, only one short block away from Union Square. In those times every gentleman sported a diamond ring, and diamond studs were *de rigueur* for evening-dress. Jewels, therefore, played a larger part in the social scheme than they do to-day. Tiffany's gave the cachet to the district by establishing itself near the southwestern corner; and there it stuck even to the day when Union Square was beginning to go a trifle dingy. I never see the old iron-front building—still standing, but passed long ago to more sober use—without thinking of Bryan Hughes. Has the city already forgotten that persistent press-hound and practical joker? Every six months or so he used to break into the front pages with another prank. Always there stood before Tiffany's a doorkeeper in tasteful but conspicuous livery who saw that the horses were hitched or held and that the ladies descended safely from their hansoms. One evening at rush hour a tall negro, dressed in an imitation of the Tiffany livery, strode importantly down Union Square West carrying a tray of brilliant imitation jewels. Just at Tiffany's door he stumbled and fell, showering the gutter and sidewalk with "gems." It took the reserves from two police precincts to quell the ensuing disorder. . . .

In the greatest days of Union Square that narrow and ornate old building at the center of the northern row was the home of The Century Co. There in the early eighties the "Century Magazine" rediscovered the Civil War, built on a series of military reminiscences a circulation unprecedented for a magazine of the literary type. The "Century" lingered there until the period of the Great War. During



the later days of their editorships Richard Watson Gilder and Robert Underwood Johnson, who as young men had looked down from the windows of their sanctum on Paris bonnets, silk hats, and smart turnouts, saw only overloaded trucks, weaving lines of surface-cars, street-corner socialist meetings, the shabby audience of street fakers.

For—jump!—Broadway is on the march again. Union Square forms at first the southern terminus, the dead-line, of the smart shopping district, and then fades into dingy decadence. Presently came the radical days of the early twentieth century, when immigration rolled in unchecked and the actual wage fell and nobody knew exactly what was the matter. Union Square became somehow focus of the socialist parades and demonstrations from the East Side, spiritual battle-ground for the social revolution. I have seen it packed to the curb with red flags and guarded by five hundred wary-eyed policemen. Even now, the little remnant of Communists keep headquarters up a flight of dark stairs not half a block away.

Fourteenth Street, the southern boundary of the square, grew rapidly cheaper and more popular, its extension past the source of Irving Place louder and more disreputable. Here after his damaging battle with Jefferies, Tom Sharkey, champion of the navy, set up his "joint" and settled his armorplate frame. At the front he maintained a long bar forever lined with quaffing gobs; this room opened into a dance-hall where one might waltz with the beer-jerkers. Nowhere is left in New York any large resort belonging so exclusively to the forecastle as Sharkey's in its great day.

Though retired from the ring, its owner waxed ever

more famous. As any witty repartee quoted in New York a decade ago was attributed either to Oliver Herford or Wilton Lackaye, as every epigram about politics carries now the stamp of Will Rogers, so in the late nineties every story depending on illiteracy for its point hung itself to Tom Sharkey. They are so old, most of them, that they should be new again. . . "Give me wan of them demi-tasses, too—and a cup of coffee." . . "Yes, I would get a nice chandelier like you suggest, but who's to play on the dom thing?" Now, over his bar I have often talked pugilism and gunnery with Tom Sharkey. I found him a shrewd person, as well furnished with ideas and as skilled in expression as most of his craft. I suspect that these anecdotes, like the old Ford jokes, were merely press.

East and west of Sharkey's arose presently a line of similar but less reputable establishments, each louder than the last. To them flowed the poisonous sweepings of the East Side, gangsters and their female complement. On all the surrounding streets, even as far as Stuyvesant Square, open vice walked in daylight. Stirred to action not only by his own observation but by urgings from the clergymen of the district, Charlie Murphy ordained a clean-up. And even before prohibition, this patch of Fourteenth Street was settling down to its present aspect and condition—in the dingy buildings above a mosaic of small business, on the ground level cheap-jack shops or department-stores in a constant upheaval of bargain sales.

No greater crowds surge before the smart department-stores of Fifth Avenue than before these gaudier windows with their displays of \$2.98 shoes and \$7.99 coats. The at-

tire of the shoppers is not so alluring; but the sharp, intent expression of womankind on bargain bent is exactly the same.

To see the quintessence of modern Fourteenth Street, visit the southeastern corner on a Saturday afternoon. The surface-cars are clanging and the taxis tooting for passage through a milling crowd. It looks at first sight like an accident or a riot; then you perceive that the units are women—all young, mostly pretty. Intently, expectantly, they are tilting up their chins to peer at the doors of two or three large bargain-sale stores whose windows display presentable but frail-looking dresses, priced as low as \$4, and hats, in which a man sees no fault, going for less than \$2. Suddenly there is a massed rush forward. Two policemen have opened the doors to let out a storeful of sated shoppers; are admitting the shoving, struggling, laughing, squealing replacements. The floor jammed to capacity, the police close the doors again. So it goes; shops emptying and refilling at half-hour intervals all Saturday afternoon long. The apprentice stenographer, the office-girl, and the store girl are at their business of keeping up appearances.

Cross the street southward and stand before a shop at Number Forty-eight. Here, in 1904, stood a pioneer penny arcade. The little man who ran it—just graduated from the fur business—was named Adolph Zukor. In 1905, he opened a five-cent moving-picture house at Number Forty-six. Here he first saw the greater possibilities of that new invention; here he generated the ideas which made the “fillums” our third industry in importance. Then go over to Number Eleven East Fourteenth. A “taxpayer” now holds

the site. It replaces a brownstone mansion. Hither, about 1908 or 1909, a bewitching young woman with blond curls used to walk to save car-fare; here she worked twelve hours a day under an energetic young man just graduated from the stage. They called the girl only Mary of the Movies in those days; and few outside of his studio knew the man at all. Ten years later the very South Sea islands acclaimed them as Mary Pickford and D. W. Griffith.

But we were trying to follow the cavortions of Broadway. Upon departing from Union Square, it stopped, this time with an air of finality, where its course rounds Madison Square and crosses the junction of Fifth Avenue and Twenty-third Street. This seemed a good permanent abode for a patriotic street which saw service in the Revolution.

For, a decade or so before the Civil War, Madison Square gave birth to the most purely American among all our institutions—baseball. In this open and useless field the town boys, time out of mind, had scuffled, kicked footballs, played the childish game of rounders. To them on summer days came a comrade saying, "Fellows, I've got a new game to teach you." Forthwith he laid out with flat stones for bases, a diamond. No one has with any certainty traced baseball further back than that. Even if we admit the prior claim for General Abner Doubleday as inventor, Madison Square retains glory enough. This was the center from which the "New York game" spread until it encircled the globe. Tim Murnane, famous successively as player, umpire, and sports writer, never passed Madison Square, but he raised his hat and repeated a little piece of his own which ran something like this:

"Boys, only two things are all American—baseball and Old Glory. Here is the spot where our forefathers planted the tiny acorn which grew into the great oak!"

The crafty old thoroughfare gave such a faithful impersonation of a street which has found the home of its heart, that it deceived even the real-estate element and the architects. Here, as though building up a civic center for all time, they began to express the new movement in American architecture—toward beauty as well as toward comfort and utility. The pioneer structure of the group was Stanford White's Madison Square Garden, which vanished only recently. We shall long miss its beautiful proportion and ornamentation, its stamp of distinctive and romantic imagination.

Every one knows probably that this, White's most famous creation, was also the scene of his tragic death. At the final curtain of a first night on its roof-garden Harry Thaw shot him. I digress to say that the show had been a rank failure, and that a certain woman in the audience, hearing the shots and the disturbance, thought until she saw the morning newspapers that some one was shooting at the actors.

Atop the tower stood Saint-Gaudens' slender and spirited Diana. A lesser collaboration of these two masters stands near the Broadway-side of the square, the seat and statue raised to the fame of Farragut.

Then, just south of the Garden, rose Lord's classic Appellate Court House—to this day double-starred in Rider. McKim, Mead & White, not to be excelled, erected on the next corner to the southward the Parkhurst Church, of gray and white marble. The cornice—preserved in the



walls of the Metropolitan Museum—was an exemplar of surpassing skill in architectural detail.

Meantime across the square the Flatiron Building had risen on the gore of Broadway and Fifth Avenue. Its odd shape, its unusual height of twenty stories, the wind currents which played such improper tricks at its base with ground-sweeping skirts—these gave it world-wide fame. In beauty and symmetry it advanced far beyond the box-like sky-scrapers which preceded it. Finally in the first decade of the present century, and when the glory was departing from Madison Avenue, Le Brun & Son erected just below the Parkhurst church their Metropolitan Life Building. Then the largest office-building in the world, it was probably the most beautiful in New York—even before 1908, when its tower arose. No fuss or feathers of excrescences or superfluous ornamentation; just the serenity of managed proportions. Now the romantic tower stands sentinel over all central Manhattan. Ripened by thirty years of use and fogs and smokes, the Court House, the Metropolitan, and the Flatiron remain; but Stanford White's creations are gone without trace—here, as everywhere, there was a curse on his fame!

Never, I suppose, was any district so much the heart and soul of all which makes New York distinctive as Madison Square in its heyday. "Society"—still a very definite body—not as to-day a hazy generalization—herded together in its own district, which was then Fifth Avenue between Washington Square on the south and the Stewart mansion, near the present Waldorf-Astoria, on the north. Madison Square therefore bisected the Smart Belt. And though



Madison Square Garden let itself out from the first to democratic events like the six-day bicycle race and indoor athletic meets, its great week of the year was the Horse Show. That brought the climax of the season; all New York seemed to put on its best array, and the shops even as far away as Harlem and Grand Street advertised exclusive gowns and novelties.

Down Broadway between the two squares lay the Ladies' Mile of smart shops and high-priced department-stores; in the later days of the period this row turned a corner and spilled out into Twenty-third Street. Up toward Herald Square ran the theaters. Most famous of them all was Daly's, whose renown will last as long as we remember John Drew's restrained art or Ada Rehan's honeyed voice. Dotted all through this lay the best restaurants. The Tenderloin—but lately baptized with that name—fringed the district, the cocktail route threaded it.

The Fifth Avenue Hotel, getting a little antiquated in the matter of conveniences and furnishings, was still maintaining its prosperity and prestige by reason of its expert hospitality and its distinguished clientele. During the great days of the square it became headquarters for politicians—city, State, and even national. In its famous Amen Corner, where they exchanged gossip and jokes and even made deals, sat at various times Conkling, Platt, Depew, Morton, Roosevelt, and a thousand lesser celebrities. The bar had that home-like air which the best bartenders were trying to put into the best saloons.

This was another resort of the late O. Henry. Concerning him, a story. There lived in those days two American

authors whom we will call Al and Jim. Both were marvelous talkers, but given to monologue. Once either Al or Jim started up, he brooked neither question nor interruption. O. Henry discovered that they had never met. Forthwith he and his accomplices maneuvered to bring them together in the bar-room of the Fifth Avenue. Then one by one the conspirators excused themselves, leaving Al and Jim seated at a table with a bottle of Scotch between them. After half an hour, O. Henry slipped back and peeped through the door. Al and Jim sat with their arms folded, glaring at each other across their untasted highballs—in utter silence. "Physics sure is vindicated," remarked O. Henry. "Irresistible force encounters immovable obstacle. Result—annihilation!"

Then Broadway, having done enough for Madison Square, jumped again. This time it was a kind of a double hop. During one infinitesimal fraction of a century she paused as for a foothold at Herald Square before leaping lightly on to Longacre. There she rests to-day. But watch her closely. She has of late been displaying nervous symptoms.

Also, at about the time when the big sleeves deflated themselves, when the brokers ceased to whistle "Floradora," when the first electric hansoms presaged the taxi and when Weber and Fields came up town, the shopping district crossed the square and moved northward up Fifth Avenue. Advancing steadily, it commercialized the stately mansions of the preceding generation. Finally even its rear-guard had marched so far toward the Park that Thirty-fourth Street has become virtually its down-town limit.

Lofts and wholesale houses flowed into the vacuum; new sky-scrapers arose. However, those edges on the square represented by Broadway and Twenty-third Street retain the old buildings, now given over to that class of business establishment which cannot as yet afford to move to Wall Street or to Times Square.

This part of the district has an air of impermanence and expectancy. For the shopping district of Fifth Avenue has found its northward progress impeded by the Park. There it meets the wave of new apartment-houses; it cannot go further. Yet as the city expands from seven millions to ten or even twenty, the shopping district must find more room. May it not take the back track, ask Madison Square, and flow again over the sites fringing this most beautiful and desirable park? I can neither criticize nor confirm this reasoning, being no real-estate expert. But at any rate Madison Square, very busy under the shadow of the high, angelic tower, seems to be waiting for something to turn up.

## *Chapter XVIII*

### THE LINE

FIFTH AVENUE begins geographically at Washington Square. However, its first six or seven blocks belong to the newer and smarter Greenwich Village, and the stretch between Fourteenth Street and Twenty-third Street has "gone wholesale." The thoroughfare which stands as synonym to the provinces for luxurious living and easy spending, begins really when the Avenue emerges from Madison Square. Nowadays, indeed, the first eight blocks above that must disappoint the expectations of the tourist; they are a catch-all of wholesale houses, clothing lofts, agencies, and shops without much pretension to smartness.

Nevertheless those eight blocks had their day! In the early years of the century, Fifth Avenue, Broadway, and Forty-second Street inclosed an enchanted triangle, wherein lay the theaters, most of the better hotels, the fringes of the Tenderloin—except for smart shops, almost everything which the tourist visits Manhattan for to see and to admire. Broadway, at the east of the triangle, was sacred to the theaters. Forty-second Street, to the north, consisting then merely of old residences made over jury-fashion for shops and flats, merely bounded it, although the corner on Times

Square was already coming into loud prominence. Fifth Avenue between Madison Square and Forty-second Street formed the eastern boundary. It was bordered with brown-stone houses which had sheltered Fashion in their time, but had now become flathouses with specialty shops, cafés, or glorified ice-cream parlors on the ground floor.

Here every afternoon flowed a gay and dazzling afternoon parade of beauty and fine raiment; and New York, borrowing a phrase from its soul-sister San Francisco, called this stretch of Fifth Avenue "the Line." It began at Twenty-sixth Street, where a little triangular building thrust a gore at the Worth monument. The original Mark Cross occupied the ground floor; above that was a school of languages, and on the garret floor a studio whose windows swept the panorama of New York at play. Just to the north stood Martin's restaurant. This establishment—French clear through—had a café facing the Broadway side; and the wide windows of its restaurant looked across boxes of flowers on to Fifth Avenue. At Martin's gathered our "gilded Bohemia"—how old-fashioned those words seem now! The spirit of the place in that heyday was the young Caruso, just then in the first blaze of his fame. To see Caruso eating spaghetti was as much an education in technique as hearing him sing "Aïda." Geraldine Farrar came sometimes, as did Mary Garden, Schumann-Heink, and the de Reszkes. Conversation stopped and heads turned at the stately entrance of a dowager who floated to her table in a cloud of white lace and ostrich plumes and seated herself with the air of an empress assuming the throne. This was



Clara Louise Kellogg, our first famous American prima donna—long since retired, but a constant visitor in old haunts.

Yet for all the well known conventionality and propriety of grand opera people, the establishment had a faintly raffish reputation. When you invited a lady to luncheon you ascertained first whether she cared to be seen in such atmospheres; they made those distinctions in the early days of the century. Now and then, it was reported, a woman tried to smoke in public at Martin's! When this happened, the head waiter glided over to the table, called her escort aside, and said, "Would you mind asking the lady to stop smoking?" It was a most useful formula: only a boulder could quarrel with a request so courteous, so considerately put. As the cigarette habit grew on our women, other establishments imitated this method—with what ultimate success we all know! If your lady had scruples you took her to the Holland House, three blocks up the Avenue. Here was superb food and a smart correctness. Of course when you were very much in funds or trying to make a distinct impression, you directed your hansom to Delmonico's or Sherry's.

From the windows of Martin's dining-room you looked at tea-time to behold one end of the afternoon parade wheel and take the back course. Though New York at the turn of the century was beginning to feel intolerably crowded, you could still walk with comfort on Fifth Avenue. Traffic moved ordinarily at a pace of six miles an hour; and a horse, unless he is running away, has a prejudice against bumping into pedestrians. The automobile was as yet only a



rich man's toy. The younger sports had their imported cars of course, with tonneaus so high in the back as to suggest bustles, with the driver's seat a pinnacle above the engine. Closed bodies were as yet almost unknown; even wind-shields awaited their inventor. The daring driver therefore wore goggles like an aviator, and the ladies wound hair and hats with "automobile veils." But these were daring variations; the private carriages, with a coachman and footman on the box, still lorded it over the pavement of Fifth Avenue. When on pleasant days of spring or autumn these equipages lowered their tops to reveal the lolling ladies, they gave an impression of wealth and luxury to which no automobile, however long and nicked, can possibly attain. Indeed, the humble hansom, in those days the public conveyance of the middle classes, had itself a subtle aura of class. Buttoned up to your chest behind its doors, you bowled along in gentle leisure and felt that you owned the Avenue.

A horn tooted in the distance; all heads along the pavement turned to behold a tally-ho and six proceeding to its stand at the Waldorf. Mr. Vanderbilt or Mr. Cutting, decorating the box in a gray top-hat and a long duster, was qualifying for the London Coaching Club. The Fifth Avenue stages were with us even then. But they were single-deckers, and patient, plodding horses drew them. At Thirty-third Street or thereabout the company had a spare driver always waiting with an extra team for the hard pull up Murray Hill. *Ding-dong-ding*—the fire-engines are coming! Of course the modern high-power red automobile makes infinitely more speed. But machinery isn't dramatic. It can

never give such thrills as three big fire-horses racing abreast with everything they have in their stout hearts.

At about tea-time of a fine autumn or spring afternoon all who's who in New York, save the Wall Street celebrities alone, was likely to pass those windows of Martin's. There came John Drew, for example, on the street as on the stage radiating a bland good humor and the latest London fashion. With him sometimes walked that talented and rising niece of his, young Ethel Barrymore. The ground-sweeping skirt of the period, the straight-front corset, the long heavy coat, could not conceal entirely her boyish figure nor hamper her boyish stride; and the pompadour, foundation for her elaborate hat, could not shadow her brilliant eyes.

That other pair of extraordinary eyes belonged to Maxine Elliott . . . Here walked the romantic figure of the young Otis Skinner with that ideal Juliet—she looked it even in the swathings of early twentieth-century dress—Maud Durbin, just become Mrs. Otis Skinner . . . Feminine gasps of recognition and appreciation followed the path of tall, lithe James K. Hackett, then at high tide of his popularity as *matinée* idol. With a kind of princely gait, Richard Harding Davis strode beside his inseparable illustrator, Charles Dana Gibson; a pair of figures so elegantly athletic that it seemed as though Gibson had drawn them both . . . Mark Twain, wearing even in the dead of winter that white flannel suit . . . Yes, John D. Rockefeller! Even he paraded now and then, and he looked as old in those days as his pictures look now . . . "Fritz" Heinze, clean-cut of profile, confident of carriage; has this age for-

gotten his somewhat sensational operations in Montana copper?

May Irwin, grinning on the crowd as genially as on her audiences . . . Evelyn Thaw, just lately arrived and already famous after a certain fashion; not quite beautiful, perhaps, but the human limit in prettiness . . . Charles M. Schwab, with a sense of steel in his movements and of iron in his build, hurrying into the Waldorf . . . Mrs. Jackson Gouraud, without whom no first night was complete, lolling back in an open carriage. Two beautiful golden-haired children flanked her, and two chow dogs—the first ever flaunted publicly in these parts.

“Society,” which was then a very definite and superior body, usually managed things so as to do its shopping in the forenoon. And yet even at the tea-hour a social expert would often identify a Mrs. Vanderbilt, a Mrs. Stuyvesant, or a Mrs. Astor gliding from a specialty shop to the door which shielded her imperturbable footman . . . Anne Held, with her affected little Parisian walk, her invariable picture-hat, and a waist that you could have ringed with your thumbs and forefingers . . . Richard Mansfield, his carriage making amends for his scantiness of stature . . . the wise Celtic countenance of Finley Peter Dunne . . . the whimsically peering face of Booth Tarkington . . . Rob Collier and Sam McClure, then at the pinnacle of the magazine business, entering the Holland House arm in arm . . . Once I turned and stared impertinently at a stately woman whose mature beauty took my breath. “Mary Anderson!” whispered an excited feminine voice beside me . . . Lillian Russell passes, and there is a flutter all along the line. Now-





FIFTH AVENUE AT FORTY-FIFTH STREET

adays we hold beauty-shows to select the queen of loveliness. But who among them enjoys half the fame of the golden, serene Lillian? The age of heroes is past; perhaps, also the age of reigning beauties.

Then, as Broadway jumped northward, Fifth Avenue kept pace. Almost in a year the Garden Theater, tucked into a corner of Madison Square Garden, had become so remote from the center of things dramatic as to spell failure for any play which opened in its pretty, intimate auditorium. Irvin Cobb said that if he planned to commit a murder, he would chose for scene of his crime the Garden Theater. Do you, old-timer, remember the run of "The College Widow" at the Garden? Forty-second Street was now the down-town limit. Presently the Public Library was to open, thrusting a new and far less showy element into the splendors of the Line. The horse hansom gave way to that funny device, the electric hansom, which after a very brief reign abdicated in favor of the multicolored taxicab. Then the soil seemed to spawn automobiles. And in spite of traffic control, life on the Avenue became for pedestrians a long nightmare of ducks and side-steps and boresome checks. Almost in one season, the glory departed.

And now lofts which housed New York's leading industry, the manufacture of clothing, jostled from two sides against the lower course of the Line. The Fifth Avenue Hotel was magicked into a modern office-building. The Holland House vacated in favor of a steamship agency. The cafés and ice-cream parlors became large but modest restaurants, some of them with Yiddish signs. It is a brisk and



cheerful business street now; cheerful especially, what with the width of the Avenue and the view to southward of the Flatiron Building, violet gray against the roseate haze of Manhattan skies. But it is no longer smart.

Oddly, the chief mementos of its old and more distinguished days are three churches. The Marble Collegiate stands firm. Doubtless the congregation hesitates to leave a building so proportionately beautiful. Notice the weather-vane topping its graceful steeple. That is one of the oldest manufactured objects to be seen out of doors in New York. It comes down directly from Dutch days, has been moved from church to church as this ancient congregation advanced northward with the city. In Twenty-eighth Street, just east of the Avenue, the buildings squeeze against the gray stone front of St. Leo's. At the turn of the century, all New York called this "Father Ducey's Church." The city always has one pet Roman Catholic priest. To-day it is the valiant Father Duffy; then it was Father Ducey, friend of the whole world. He is dead, and his congregation has long since scattered. Now church and parish-house are tenanted by a convent, whose nuns practise the perpetual adoration; it has become a very holy place.

The famous Little Church around the Corner lies just off the Avenue in Twenty-ninth Street. We are forgetting, I find, how the Church of the Transfiguration got that popular name. George Holland, actor, was dead; loved and lamented by his profession. Joseph Jefferson, in charge of arrangements, decided to give him a church funeral. Jefferson tried two or three churches along this stretch of Fifth

Avenue. They would have none of him. As one pastor explained, Holland was an actor; therefore had he died in sin. Enter suddenly a friend of Holland, who said: "There is a little church around the corner which says it will take poor George in." "Then," said Jefferson, "God bless the little church around the corner!" And the stage, which loves tradition, still regards the Church of the Transfiguration as its very own.

The rectory, the ornamental iron fences, the little shrine of a gate, the irregular, red-brown church walls, border a pleasant strip of lawn—as gentle and refreshing a little close as one will see in all Manhattan. The church is built in English fashion, the sills running down to the ground level. One might step from the sashes of the stained glass windows to the moist, green earth. That architectural trick gives the typical English country house its air of warm hospitality; and I cease to wonder as I regard the Little Church around the Corner that it took in poor George Holland when the Victorian conventionality of greater churches spurned him.

Finally, there stands firm the Waldorf-Astoria, externally a riot of red stone, too much like Coney Island to please critical taste. But what is architecture compared with the interest of a hotel which has seen such a flow and riot of life? In the days of which I have been writing it reigned gloriously supreme. That was a dull week when a display of national flags from its Fifth Avenue cornice failed to announce the presence in its royal suite of visiting king, premier, prince, or ambassador. Its big bar-room, with the rich, dark mahogany finish, served as a kind of club for the

broker element,—then far more sporting in its tastes than at present. From center the gossip of the town spread as from a radio transmitter.

In that period the public banquet raged unchecked, and the Waldorf-Astoria boasted the largest and finest banquet-hall in Manhattan. It occurs to me that the public banquet is retiring into the background. What has done it—prohibition, the automobile, the radio, or all of them? I only know that twenty-five years ago the great after-dinner speakers like Chauncey M. Depew, Simeon Ford, and Charles Francis Murphy held a special niche in the Pantheon of New York; and that, except when Will Rogers takes a vacation from the road or Irvin Cobb consents to favor, the niche is empty now. The row of seats along the northern corridor was the original Peacock Alley. I can see it yet; the occupants of the big padded chairs wearing on their faces the heavenly expectant expression of womankind about to have luncheon or tea in public, and wearing on their hands the long white kid gloves which were then the uniform of festivity.

Every decade or so some New York hotel gets on the imagination of the back country, becomes a legend and a symbol. And from the woods of Michigan to the bayous of Louisiana, the mills of Pittsburgh to the camps of the Sierra, "Waldorf-Astoria" stood at the turn of the century for luxury and splendor and a good time in the giddy metropolis. Sprinkled among the brokers in the bar-room sat miners "blowing it" after a strike; ranchers varying eleven months of hard riding on their desert principalities with a month of hard spending on Broadway; Pittsburgh

millionaires newly rich from the great coup in Tin Plate; soldiers of fortune back from a successful venture at gun-running. What tales have we not heard at the Waldorf bar!

Well, the gaudy and hectic district moved on past the Waldorf-Astoria. Other hotels of its location and period yielded place to business or became frankly second-class. But the Waldorf stuck stubbornly to its ground. Henry Boldt, that genius of inn-keeping, died; the only Oscar carried on. And the back country held in part to its old loyalty. From Maine, Michigan, Arizona, California, the third generation of guests comes by instinct to the Waldorf as the base for its whirl at Manhattan. In no place on our island can we better study than in its lobbies the men and women who are officers in our army of progress—those lords and ladies, by right of brains and enterprise, in the great hinterland which self-centered Manhattan is so prone to ignore.

## *Chapter XIX*

### THE WOMAN'S CITY

IN spite of rubber-neck wagons and personally conducted tours, the best way of seeing Fifth Avenue remains the cheapest—the upper deck of a stage. And the least observant tourist, viewing the street from this dizzy platform, must notice the sudden transformation at Thirty-fourth Street.

Below that wide cross-town artery with its tight procession of motor traffic, the sidewalks are only comparatively crowded and the pace is rather leisurely. Murray Hill grows steep—as city hills go—at this point; and viewing the western sidewalk from your elevation, you have a sense that a tidal wave of humanity is flowing down upon you. As though halted by some invisible dam, it never crosses Thirty-fourth Street, but either eddies back northward or turns and courses past the foot of the great walls to the westward. A second glance—where are the men? A few representatives of the bullied sex struggle for place, it is true; but their soberer garments and apologetic mien seem to bury them. From ten o'clock to six, it is as though twenty

matinées were letting out at once—in winter a dark, rich mosaic of fur coats; in May, a rippling flower-bed.

You are entering by its main gate the Woman's City, the Ladies' Acre, the eight or ten square blocks of New York which the spending sex holds as its very own. For here, after the last nervous northward movement, settled the more ambitious department-stores and the larger specialty shops. The business of ministering to woman's more expensive wants is massed in this district as definitely as the theaters are massed between Times Square and Columbus Circle. A few stragglers have settled in the region of Thirty-fourth and Broadway; one daring establishment, as though anticipating the future, has erected its new building at Fiftieth Street just opposite St. Patrick's Cathedral; the oldest of all has held the fort for fifty years at Astor Place. These, I think, are the only important exceptions.

In the Woman's City—eight blocks of Fifth Avenue with spurs running westward along the cross-town arteries of Thirty-fourth and Forty-second—the rest have erected their eight or ten story buildings with ground areas of half a block. The largest of all has \$16,000,000 invested in land, building, and plant. Plainly they intend to defy the nervous moods of New York; to hold this region perpetually sacred to the retail sale of luxury goods, even as Regent Street, London, or the Rue de la Paix, Paris. Your grandmother, middle-aged madame, bought her crinolines and basques in Canal Street; your mother her shirt-waists and brush braid in the Ladies' Mile between Union Square and Madison Square; you purchase your transparent hose and your sport sweaters in the Woman's City above Thirty-fourth Street.



And it is not unlikely that your great-granddaughter will shop for her synthetic diamonds and her Tibetan sandals in this identical spot.

On an afternoon when the sidewalks run full, you are more than human if voluntarily you pay much attention to the architectural lay-out of Fifth Avenue; animate beauty on the sidewalks and inanimate smartness in the windows are much too fascinating. But trying for a moment to be more than human—edge to the northwest corner, hold your stance against the buffetings of the crowd, and regard Fifth Avenue as a whole.

Southward, as I have said, the street is far less crowded. However, the hill drops in this direction, foreshortening your view, exaggerating the numbers of the pedestrians. It seems a river of souls, continuous as time, resistless as eternity. When distance has rendered it a mere thread it vanishes in the electric haze which manages to beautify but never to obscure Manhattan vistas.

If it be a "partly cloudy" day with leaden masses of cumulus above, with the sun struggling forth at intervals, the end of the view becomes magic. Just where the haze begins to gather thick the Flatiron Building thrusts its wedge into the view; and behind it, pleat after pleat, run the edges of the high loft buildings beyond. When the banded sunlight languidly pierces the purplish-silver mists with saffron, these eminences give forth a subdued, mystical glow. This, for form and color, might be a distant view of mesas in the Navajo Desert. To the mountain-bred, the man-made ranges of New York offer constantly such striking parallels. The rise of Murray Hill shears off the vista



GREELEY SQUARE



to the northward; there Fifth Avenue seems to end in the lacy spires of St. Patrick's Cathedral, the sky-scraper towers on the site of the old Hotel Netherland, and a gash against the bright air.

Now, when the red light in the tower again stops north-and-south traffic, drift with the crowd to the eastern corner and look up at the buildings on the other side. You are a poor, dour creature if you do not experience a thrill of gaiety. And if you are also a traveled person the reason comes on the heels of the emotion. As Gramercy Park seems a bit of London and Stuyvesant Square a corner of Philadelphia, so this is a piece of Paris. A taller Paris, if you will, and a richer Paris; but bearing the stamp nevertheless.

Without notable exception, the gray-stone or cream-brick buildings are of French Renaissance architecture. Their builders have even adapted that trick which the French so well understand, of making the façades to these marts of luxury a trifle more ornate than would seem tasteful for public buildings or office structures. Fifth Avenue adapted its street-lamps, stretching their double line of twin saffron globes over the curve of the hill, from the Bois de Boulogne; and even the graceful traffic towers took their inspiration from the court accessories of Louis XIV. They harmonize with the surrounding scene, though not always with their human contents. A six-foot New York cop, hoarsely bawling out traffic from one of these dainty fancies, is a recurrent humor of Fifth Avenue. In the nineteenth century the French put their stamp on the creation and distribution of luxury goods the world over. The glory is passing now from Paris to New York, from the Rue de la

Paix to Fifth Avenue. But they have had a partial revenge. This successful rival has itself become half French.

As for the crowd, its character changes with the hour. The street is smartest at about ten or eleven in the morning, when the rich, taking advantage of their leisure, shop early and avoid the rush. Park Avenue, modern synonym for wealth, is supposed to do its spending in the specialty shops above Forty-seventh Street. As a matter of fact, these exclusive establishments offer very little which cannot be had at the better department-stores—if the lady is willing to do some pleasant searching.

So at this time of day gleaming limousines and imported berlines line all the curbs, and correct chauffeurs, guarded by equally correct and important chows or police-dogs, gaze impersonally on the distance. Presently madame emerges, usually in the expensive simplicity of clothes that are all lines and a hat that is all shape. As she drops her casual directions to the chauffeur or the starter she speaks in that clipped accent taught by the most fashionable schools. A hundred curious, critical, and admiring eyes follow her. Here is class! What is her secret? They are noting every detail.

The inexpert eye of a mere man perceives the difference between this exemplar of perfection and her aspiring critics, but he cannot for the life of him tell the reason. To him sidewalks and curb alike flaunt super-refined wealth; all the more striking perhaps because it affects simple morning attire. Only after a course of tutelage from a shrewd wife or sweetheart does he begin to perceive the separate elements which make up this parade of vanities, and to under-

stand that Fifth Avenue draws the wealth not only of our city, but of the whole American continent. A costume just a trifle too fussy, hints of country dressmaking, a pleasurably excited manner, and an open, cheerful accent with much stress on the r's—her husband or father has just struck it rich in Arizona, tapped an oil stratum in Oklahoma, financed an irrigation district in Idaho. The touch of country dressmaking will be gone in a week . . . A lazily drawling voice, a soft, feminine droop of the head and shoulders—Georgia, helping spend the proceeds of the cotton crop. Heads turn in veiled scrutiny, and there are covert little nudges at the passage of a girl who looks like the correct product of a young ladies' finishing-off school. Half of the parade has seen her within the fortnight on the screen. She is Miss Hollywood, spending on her vacation a part of her five-thousand-dollar-a-week salary.

The sparkle of the Parisian French, which pierces the chatter like the notes of a flute, proceeds from the employed class of this region. Perhaps half of our French colony gets its living from the stores of the Woman's City or the specialty shops in the district lying to its north. You would scarcely pick them out by eye as members of the employed class, their dress is so chic. A fashionable modiste told me once that her French seamstresses, landing from the boat, go at once to a coöperative French boarding-house, thence to the employment agency, and thence to the job. From that time forth the work-room, the boarding-house, and the Woman's City bound their lives. They never see an American newspaper—not even a tabloid—but the girls in the house combine and subscribe for "Le Matin"



and the "Courrier des Etats Unis." For diversion they walk on Fifth Avenue and rave or boil over the shop-windows. The rest, except for mass on Sunday morning, is just work and economy. Three or four years of this, and then Mlle. Parisienne suddenly packs her modest trunk and goes home by steerage. She has saved up a *dot*; now she can marry and live happy ever after in her dear Paris!

Though French Canada has dwelt separate from the mother-country for three centuries, Marie Chapdelaine has kept her racial instinct for chic. From Montreal, Quebec, Three Rivers, she brings the profits of the pulp forests and the mines; even in late years does she return to the land of their origin the dollars scattered along the St. Lawrence by American tourists. In spring and early summer the sonorous music of Spanish breaks out, and Iberian types, either majestically, serenely plump or ravishingly exotic, sprinkle all the morning crowds. Here come the profits from the ranges of the Argentine, the emerald diggings of Ecuador, the oil wells of Mexico, the cane fields of Cuba!

These—in one mere dash at the subject—are out-of-town types. Such visitors hold an important position in the commercial scheme of the Woman's City. Nevertheless the rank and file belong by residence to New York. Middle afternoon brings out all sorts and conditions of the beloved sex. The morning's housework or housekeeping is done or work has gone slack in the office; time for a little shopping. This area, observe, does not confine itself to expensive luxury goods, though you would think it to look at the windows. The stores vary in quality and "exclusiveness," and some of them maintain bargain basements or specialize in

necessities. There are even two five-and-ten-cent stores! And if you want a paper of pins, why purchase in Grand Street or 125th Street when Fifth Avenue charges the same price and throws in this fascinating show? You may find dingy and slatternly women in the afternoon crowd, if you look for them—which usually you don't. The eye has nobler interests.

As you wait in a gentle but insistent crush for the traffic on the side street to stop and let you through, as you flow on with the resistless tide up the Avenue, the wife or sweetheart at your elbow is constantly exclaiming under her breath, "Look!" "Look at her!" "Look at *that one!*" "Can any *man* see how beautiful she is?" With San Francisco, Hollywood, Louisville, and Philadelphia proclaiming the beauty of their women as the climax of their advantages, a New Yorker hesitates to assert himself. But I must tell the truth even at the risk of that boastfulness which ill befits a world metropolis. It is still the beauty-mart of the country. Hollywood? She forgets that buried among our greater activities we have a considerable motion-picture industry of our own. We are the center for the legitimate stage, unapproached and unrivaled. There are the night clubs too, and the fashionable dressmaking establishments with their steady demand for mannequins. Looks are an asset even in the business life of the town. The pretty "outside woman" who receives your card or smooths down your irritations in the reception-rooms of ten thousand establishments did not get her job by sheer accident. Finally, wealth has a habit of marrying beauty, regularly or irregularly; and the greatest concentration of wealth in the world is here. San Francisco's

famous old *Matinée Parade*, Madrid's Church Parade on Holy Thursday, display only one or two types. On Fifth Avenue you see every type—lean and boyish, plump and languorous; slim and spirituelle; golden blonde, silver blonde, ashen blonde, nut brown, tawny brown, shadow brown, sheer brunette, Latin fire, Semitic mystery, Irish coyness, Teutonic stateliness, English purity of line and complexion.

Before the war there may have been some excuse for a woman's going to Europe for the purpose of adorning her person or her house. But since New York became by a capricious gift of the gods financial capital of the world, her only excuse is the excitement of the trip. The most cunningly fabricated silks of Lyons come to our Woman's City, either in the bolt or in the finished product of the Parisian modistes; the rarest furs of the Siberian steppes and the Hudson Bay forests; the filmiest laces of Brussels, Dublin, Le Puy, Venice; the bonanza discoveries of the South Sea pearl divers; the most cunning creation of the Quimper and Limoges potters. For the Woman's City displays, in those windows which are like glimpses into palaces, not only the staples and accessories of dress and personal adornment but tableware, the fancies of house furnishings, gems. Although most of the first-class jewelers are gathered in the district of specialty shops up toward the park, two of the greatest have settled in enormous buildings south of Forty-second Street. In the vaults of the older and more famous lay last year the greatest blue diamond in the world and—still uncut—the largest precious opal ever discovered.

Despite the enormous land values in this region, the un-

fillable demand for sites, three relics of the brick-and-brown-stone age thrust themselves into the color scheme. Most beautiful of all is the Brick Presbyterian Church, with its wide nave, its slender spire, and its somber ornamentation. Most humanly interesting is that solid four-story-and-base-ment mansion on the northwestern corner of Thirty-ninth Street. Down the side street runs the paneled brick wall which guards its garden; and the group ends in a correct stable such as belonged to all mansions fifty years ago. Two polished brass slots labeled "mail" and "newspapers" hint that what the inmates most desire of this crowded district is privacy. To its north on Fifth Avenue runs a high board fence trimmed at the top with sharp spikes.

Here dwell the three Wendell sisters, finishing out their lives in the home of their childhood. They can afford the fortune which they must pay every year in taxes; next to the Astor the Wendell is the greatest real-estate fortune in New York. That area behind the board fence is probably the most valuable and desired unoccupied plot in Manhattan. The Wendells have rejected all offers; progress in this quarter awaits the disappearance of the family.

The announcer on the rubber-neck wagon tells his tourists that they maintain this garden, with its heavy burden of taxes, for the benefit of their dog. A painter whose studio looks down from a lofty building in Fortieth Street tells me that he does often see a dog sunning itself on fine days beside the hedges. Sometimes the doors of the stable open, and through the trucks and parked cars of the side street pass two matched blacks propelled and directed by a pedigreed coachman and footman, with cockades in their high

hats. The Wendell ladies are about to drive abroad. And yet when the parlor on the ground floor is a-dusting and the maid opens the windows, she could touch with her hand one of the busiest crowds in New York!

Across the street stands the five-story red building, in the 1870 style, of the Union League Club. This, like the Wendell family, shows no sign of moving. Its broad windows furnish padded reserved seats for a private view of the Avenue. With the value of the site and the consequent taxation, the expense to the members must be very high. But very likely they deem a stage-box on Fifth Avenue cheap at any price!







THE SKY-SCRAPERS CREEP UP FIFTH AVENUE

## *Chapter XX*

### THE PUBLIC LIBRARY AND ITS ENVIRONS

FOR six blocks north from the Waldorf-Astoria, Fifth Avenue is a main highway of the Woman's City; on the thronging sidewalks you encounter six imperious, shoving ladies to one apologetic, dodging man. At Fortieth Street, the crowd begins abruptly to change its character. The butterflies flutter there still, in passage to the quarter of specialty shops up toward the Park. But for a few blocks northward, two or three others of the great circles which compose human New York, interlock with the Parade of Vanities. First, before the Public Library eddy and struggle for place nearly all those elements of race and station which make the mosaic of our city: students of course; the boys in the latest imitation of Princeton fashions, the girls swinging along with an independent, emancipated gait . . . old and ill dressed men with dreamy eyes; retired laborers these, living on the scant bounty of a son or daughter and reading their days away in contentment of vicarious adventure . . . their complement, little, timid-looking old ladies . . . men of middle years with abstracted, scholarly faces, probably professors from our dozen universities or scholars on inde-

pendent research . . . women with eagerly intelligent faces and the severe but smart dress which marks the modern blue-stocking . . . the facial symbols of every race known to New York—as the waxy-blond complexion of the Slav, the wistful dark eyes of the Italian, the beetling brow and grave expression of the German; the aquiline profile of the Semite.

On every score, the Public Library deserves more than passing attention. The building first; wide and rather low for its width, set behind long courses of gently ascending steps which give an impression of amplitude and hospitality. Its classic façade blossoms with decorations of inscription and statue. It is a risky thing—decorating cold, white marble. Personally I feel that the architects of the Public Library have faced down the danger and triumphed. The innumerable and perfect details, as MacMonnies's fine statues over the fountains, Potter's noble if somewhat supercilious lions at the entrance, make to my eyes a harmonious and human entity. If like the Chinese we named things simply and for what they are, I suppose we should call this the Temple of the Delights of the Intellect. I am aware that both extreme classicists in art and extreme modernists criticize this façade as over-decorated; even do they prefer the simplicity of its rear elevation, heaving glimpses of book-stacks up over Bryant Park. Well, it is a difference of opinion. Modern architects rave over the perfection of Amiens Cathedral; but for poets, irregular, blossoming Chartres. That façade of the Public Library has the human touch. It invites you to come in and read, as Chartres to come in and pray.

A decade and a half ago, when it was just finished, the building stood nobly alone, rising impressively above most of its surroundings; there were still private residences on the abutting streets. Since then a perpendicular transformation has come over the district. The Public Library lies at the bottom of a gulf; around it rise thirty stories of towers and windows. They have not spoiled or overshadowed it, but only given it a new attractiveness. Though there are beautiful structures among them, it outshines them all, as a jewel its setting.

Here indeed has arisen a new sky-scraper district, a very notable group of ultra-modern buildings. The pedestrian coming north from the down-town palaces of finance for the first time reëncounters modern step-back architecture. It begins opposite the Public Library in the tawny building of the Farmers' Loan and Trust Company. It runs round two sides—south and west—of Bryant Park. It breaks into full flower on Fifth Avenue, just north of Forty-second Street, where of old and regretted years stood those palaces of culinary joy, Sherry's and Delmonico's. The Fortieth Street edge has at present by all odds the most distinction. Two tower buildings, not stepped back but peaked and ornamented at the top, first hit the eye. And beyond is the American Radiator Building; as daringly successful as anything in Manhattan. Gothic, and of dark stone which appears black in some lights, its perpendicular design flies upward to clusters of gilded rods. It is as though it broke into flame at the top. At night, indeed, it does; this was a leader in the fashion of the illuminated tower. The electric lamps, concealed by the convolutions of the

ornamentation, play mysterious tricks with the reflections of the gilded rods. And because the building is black, in some moods of the night this effect seems to float in air. The lower structures between the towers—mostly housing for smart specialty shops—have their own distinction of design. This is one of the finest rows in New York—Manhattan at its best.

It seems all the more distinguished by contrast with Bryant Park. That useful and necessary breathing-place has the curse of the elevated on one side and the sheer rise of the library's book-stacks on the other. Gasoline or vibration or both combine hereabout to blight all vegetable life; the scattered trees are very sick. Also, the down-and-outers of the city have an odd tendency to congregate in the park nearest the center of wealth. Forty years ago, in the days of Bunner and Stockton, the novelist who brought a character to extreme and lonely poverty left him on a bench in Union Square. Twenty-five years ago, when Davis and O. Henry flourished, it was Madison Square; now it is Bryant Park. Only a few monuments—big ones—can take away the curse. And considering New York's traditional hard luck with public monuments, I hesitate to put forth this suggestion.

But to the westward, across the elevated, the rim of Bryant Park is blessed with one of those accidental mountain effects which are always taking your breath in Manhattan. Sixth Avenue goes by the rule of any street which the elevated has blighted. It has not improved. So the vista begins with low buildings which scarcely peep above the long steel lattice. Step! And behind them rise ten stories of



stone and windows. Step! And over them towers a twenty-story wall. Step! And rises the fluted tower of the Wur-litzer Building, itself by night a minikin castle, flowing light on its top—a mystery of concealed illumination. It is like a stairway up which an archangel strides to his take-off into the bright air. Northward on Forty-second Street rises the sheer wall of a great department-store, and a thirty-story step-back of buff tile.

Round the corner; you are back on the Avenue. And northward, sheer through the Woman's City and perpendicular to its main thoroughfare, runs a district as masculine as a prize-fight—used to be. For three or four blocks on the eastern side, tower step-back buildings, two of them dizzy structures with tall finial towers arising from their box-like stages. This is front gate to the "new Wall Street"; a score of great banking and trust companies housed in majesty between Fifth Avenue and the Grand Central Station. The shops on the ground floors or in the lower buildings under these sky-scrappers have the mannish touch, as those further up and down the Avenue the womanish. Here is a haberdasher's window, displaying like a king on his throne one perfect dress shirt flanked with managed art by its complement in ties, gloves, and hose. Here is a sporting-goods window against which any man wants to flatten his nose; here a tobacconist whose exclusive mixtures, spilling from a calabash, make you reach for the plebeian army brand in your pocket. Over on Madison Avenue is a very Temple of Man's Modes—I steal this phrase from *What the Man Will Wear* in the theater programs. On its six floors it will outfit you smartly with everything the most fastidious may



desire; from shirt-studs to a shoe-shining case—for your valet of course—and from a fur-lined overcoat to the ribbon of a military decoration. A block further up, rises—equally large—a glorified sporting-goods store in whose adventurous displays I find myself window-shopping like a woman. It not only offers every variety of camping-equipment, sporting-arms, golf-clubs, tennis-rackets; but it will outfit you on a week's notice for any adventure with life and sport in any quarter of the globe. "I am starting on an expedition to the North Pole," you say to the floor-walker. "I want an equipment." "Ah, yes," replies the floor-walker imperturbably. "Boy, ask Mr. Smith to step over. Mr. Smith is our polar expert, sir." Mr. Smith, entirely unsurprised, ascertains your itinerary, inquires into your private tastes and choices; next thing you have a complete list, from tents, clothing, and firearms to fireless cookers, nested utensils, and pemmican boxes—together with the estimate. If instead of the Pole you have designs on lions in the Ruindi, giant anacondas along the Amazon, Mayan relics in Yucatan, or leavings of primitive man in Mongolia, the details vary; but the matter-of-fact proceeding is the same.

Turn back now, and cross the Avenue. Stretching for a block or so westward in Forty-third, Forty-fourth, and Forty-fifth streets lies the new club district; in convenient proximity to the up-town Wall Street on one side and the center of jazz and night life on the other. All sorts of clubs; "exclusive," artistic, professional, even a trifle Bohemian; varying in physical equipment from the Harvard Club, with its extensive dormitories and its great assembly hall of Stanford White's designing, to that bijou floor in a

squeezed little house where the painters, architects, musicians, and authors of the Coffee House meet for luncheon . . . the Century, lair of the older generation among writing men . . . the New York Yacht, custodian of the *America's* Cup, as rich in interior decoration as in the private fortunes of its members . . . the St. Nicholas, eligible only to those whose families dwelt in New York when this State ratified the Constitution . . . across the Avenue the tall Yale Club . . . half a dozen fraternity clubs . . . just to give the other sex a foothold, the Twelfth Night, sacred solely to women of the stage . . . the Bar Association, conveniently adjoined to great law libraries . . . the City Club where gather sociologists, reformers, politicians, all whose main interest is public life and its improvement . . . the Town Hall Club, of somewhat similar membership.

The façades have that severe elegance befitting club streets. And here my sex prevails as definitely as does the other in the department-store belt. At lunch hour the pavements run full of correct tailoring, and the curbs blossom with smart runabouts. When in early autumn or late spring these cars are discharging young men in flannels or golf togs, the eye finds constant amusement with groups which look as though posed for one of those tire advertisements in the magazines.

The pleasant gray club-house of the Lambs stands appropriately nearest the theatrical district. Its membership is almost all of the stage. Its "gambols"—professionally amateur shows in which the actors satirize their own calling and this funny world—have given inspiration to a thousand similar performances in State and nation. This is

perhaps the liveliest club in New York; half the jokes and quips of the day originate in its wide, sociable ground-floor grill. When an out-of-town guest sits at luncheon in the Lambs, his head is turning constantly like a woman's on Fifth Avenue to witness the graceful passage of Tommy Meighan, George Cohan, Dave Warfield, a dozen other celebrities of stage and screen.

Now let us finish as we began and turn back—struggling gently across Forty-second Street in mesh with the largest crowd which gathers consistently on this planet—to the Public Library. If you have more interest in life and learning than in wealth, fashion, and clothes, that is the natural thing to do. The Public Library stands in the heart of this district, the soul-center of that distinguished building-group now forming itself about Forty-second Street and the Avenue. It has not only local importance but national. In New York, remember, are concentrated the book and publishing business of the United States, the theatrical business, hundreds of research laboratories, both technical and purely scientific, four or five first-class universities, trade-schools by the score. The demand for ephemeral current books “to take home” is satisfied in our library system largely by the millions of volumes in the branch establishments. This central building with its 2,500,000 volumes counts essentially as a reference library, astonishingly rich and complete. As to its richness I cite the fact that it owns four Shakspeare first folios, the most notable collection of rare English Bibles in the United States and a Gutenberg Bible; as to its completeness, that a scholar who had searched in vain all the libraries and bureaus of Washington to establish the identity



THE "NEW" LEXINGTON AVENUE



of an obscure Revolutionary officer, ran his man to earth in the American Historical Room.

Useful and used, it is the magazine of ammunition for New York's intellectual dominance over these United States. Of late I have seen at its card-catalogues Fannie Hurst, confirming some reference in the novel just building; Will Durant on a squirrel track of philosophy; Elinor Wylie cramming herself with lore of the Santa Fé trail for "The Orphan Angel"; Ida Tarbell, George Middleton, Homer Croy, Arthur Guiterman—what does a poet need of reference-books? These I recognized because they belong to my circle of New York. But a chemist or a biologist, a historian or a theologian, would doubtless have identified figures just as important in his own circle. So much for the eminent and known. However, they who day and night fill the reading-room with its ceiling of an Italian palace are mostly obscure folk and young.

A few of them will be less obscure some day. Study their faces and you realize that not one in four belongs to the old-American breed. They are the first generation of the foreign-born, working up from the tenements . . . An editor of my acquaintance became aware that one of his stenographers, reared on the East Side, had intelligence, tact, and considerable self-acquired cultivation. He made her his secretary. "Do you read French?" he inquired. "No," she replied. "That is a pity," he remarked; "it would be of use to you in this job." Six months later he commanded, "Have some one translate this French document." "Oh, that isn't necessary," she replied, "I can read French now." . . . I never see those rows of intent readers with-



out reflecting that my breed, if it intends to hold its leadership, must put on a little more steam.

A fine house of all the people, this Public Library. Where the main stairs curve up with marble majesty toward the reading-rooms stand a series of stone benches. Usually these are occupied by derelicts, some reading newspapers which appear to have been salvaged from ash-cans, some sleeping until such time as an attendant catches them at it. In the New York Genealogical Room you encounter elderly ladies so well born that they need not trouble themselves to be smart, poring over dusty documents. Marching two by two under command of teachers, advance demurely a young ladies' class, bent on improving their collective mind in the galleries. As noon approaches, girls with the independent stride of the New York flapper pace the main reception-room or the steps until out of the crowd emerges, with adoration in his eyes, the one particular young man. Statistics compiled from the account-books of Cupid show that the New York Public Library has been the rendezvous for more luncheon engagements than any other spot on the habitable globe.

For among our art collections permanently open to the public this of the Public Library stands in fame—if not in merit—second only to that of the Metropolitan Museum. Also, no month passes when some loan collection of paintings, prints, or etchings does not enrich its galleries. There for a whole winter stood open to public inspection the incomparable treasures in books, illuminations, and manuscripts of the Morgan collection. The permanent art exhibition runs to the conventional and classic. Though it includes

such masters as del Sarto, Reynolds, Raeburn, Stuart, Copley, Peale, Turner, Constable, Ruysdael, the taste which made the selection, a modernist feels, is that of forty years ago, when every painting must tell a story.

"Sir," said an artistic insurgent to the curator of the Boston Art Museum, "you have here seven mummies in cases and seven directors in padded chairs. Put the directors in the mummy cases and the mummies in the chairs, and you will get along much better." Similar criticism might apply to the galleries of the Public Library. But the collection is educational; here the student may follow the course of painting for the last two centuries—excepting only its latest phases. Which is perhaps the appropriate purpose of a library exhibition.

## *Chapter XXI*

### THE SKIRTS OF THE CATHEDRAL

WHEN, about 1850, the Roman Catholic Church chose Fiftieth Street and Fifth Avenue as the site of its cathedral, the archbishop and his advisers looked into the future. The main residence district of New York still lay far southward. The present site of the Public Library held the town reservoir. A negro orphan asylum stood just above the Forty-second Street corner; to the north ran open fields and truck-gardens.

But the fashionable district of lower Fifth Avenue was marching rapidly up this broad central highway. It seemed only fair to assume that it would reach some day to the corner of the Park, and that about it, to east and west and north, would cluster the humbler residences. St. Patrick's Cathedral would stand then splendid in the midst of splendors, yet accessible to all men.

In forty more years the judgment of the archbishop and his advisers seemed vindicated. Then the city whirled on to a size and richness of which no one dared dream in the middle nineteenth century. And now that New York is shaking itself into something like permanent form, the com-

pleted cathedral centers and embellishes not a residence district but a region of retail super-trade, noted the land over for beauty of setting, luxury of furnishing, and sophisticated spending.

Built with leisure, as a cathedral should be, St. Patrick's did not receive until 1906 the final touch of its charming Lady chapel behind the high altar. However, until the end the builders followed James Renwick's designs. He worked in an age of Gothic which missed the final element of the Gothic spirit. Unless he was copying Chartres or Rheims, Amiens or Seville, the architect expressed himself in the mathematical, proved proportions of mid-Victorianism; whereas the old Frankish builder delighted in whimsical irregularities, plays of fancy, disharmonies which were notes in some greater mystic harmony. To recapture that, our architecture had to wait for the medieval souls of Goodhue and Cram. Yet even with the limitations of his time, Renwick succeeded gloriously. The builders of famous Cologne Cathedral, working in the nineteenth century on the same formula, produced a thing not half so true and fine.

It has aspects which, suddenly glimpsed, flood the soul with awe; and that is the emotional test of the Gothic. Stand midway and to one side and look upward at the edge where the nave encounters the crossing. There Renwick has caught something of the Gothic secret. As did the French builder of Amiens, he makes altitudes which are comparatively insignificant, when measured by the foot-rule, seem to spring upward into infinity. No sky-scraper gives such impression of heavenly height. And in these fifty years the chrisms of age have anointed St. Patrick's, incense and

candle-smoke have stained it, the aspirations of the human heart have ripened it, until it seems as venerable as Charlemagne.

Without, Renwick's triumph is his spires. When they were new they rose over every northward view of the city. That mere mathematical eminence has passed. For years the Heckscher Building, just above and on the other side of the Avenue, has topped them by ninety feet; still higher climb the new step-back hotels on the Park corner. And yet, by sheer merit of grace and mystery, they seem still to dominate Fifth Avenue.

Except for a few hours of the night, the interior is never lonely. There are the morning masses; at noon of a week-day in Lent the congregation sometimes crowds to the doors. Between these ceremonies isolated figures drop constantly out from the crowds that drift before its majestic entrances, disappear through its green storm-doors. Inside they pray under the splashes of subdued colored light from its stained glass or wander round its ambulatories, staring upward through the thick silence at its groining and traceries and storied windows. All the morning come wedding parties; sometimes only a boy and a girl with two attendants; sometimes all the trimmings of a veil, orange-blossoms, bridesmaids in troops, and a great congregation. On the heels of the wedding party may enter a funeral, and, if the beloved of the dead belong to our alien races, you see strange burial customs as when the French mourners march past the coffin sprinkling it with holy water from an aspergill. Finally, there are the great ceremonies when St. Patrick's is at its most impressive—the nave a field of

bowed heads, the distant high altar a mosaic of hazy light and blurred color.

Outside, Fifth Avenue swells to its diapason. Though one department-store, finding space in this valuable ground has erected its gray pile elbow-to-elbow with the cathedral, though one or two banks have gained a narrow foothold, the department-store district proper stops dead at Forty-second Street and the up-town Wall Street at Forty-seventh. For ten blocks north of that lie only specialty shops and a few stately relics from a passing period when every family in the Social Register aspired to a mansion on Fifth Avenue.

"Specialty" establishments I have called them; the term seems trivial; but we have no other. There are in this district shoe shops where the elegant of Park Avenue will pay sixty dollars for a pair of evening-slippers; dressmakers' shops where the mannequins parade exclusive five-hundred-dollar creations straight from Paris; art galleries where a price of ten thousand dollars on a painting passes for small change; jewelers where the clerk does not even blink when he takes an order for a two-hundred-thousand-dollar pearl necklace.

Here towers the Olympus of success in pleasing the public—photographers who rank for art and almost for price with portrait painters; milliners whose names, in Denver and Detroit and San Francisco as in New York, stand synonymous with chic; hatters whose artistic advertisements fill pages in the magazines de luxe; booksellers who on occasion dress their windows with fortunes in first editions; automobile agencies which have strayed snobbishly from the generality of their kind on Broadway and whose



windows display the single gem of an imported custom-built car; antique shops rich with the cream of Plymouth County and the Old Dominion, Touraine, Andalusia and Venezia. Financial capital of the world, climax of a prosperity—almost perturbing—such as no nation has ever experienced before, New York draws the best. And along these ten blocks of Fifth Avenue and the side streets which break its course, the best of that best awaits purchasers.

It would have drawn even more of man's finest material productions but for the alarm among those European nations which spawned the Old Masters, lest the dreaded Yankee millionaire loot their heritage. Against American purchase of the irreplaceable, they have erected barriers both of law and social sanction. Yet the Old Masters do seep in. No winter month passes but the Fifth Avenue art galleries or the two great auction houses, a block or so eastward, exhibit some Romney or Reynolds, some Van Dyke, Rembrandt, or Titian, sent here for sale or loaned while en route to its proud owner's private gallery.

Between times are continual loan exhibitions; the best of these, could they be held permanently together, would make collections fit to fill a royal gallery. The circle of Manhattan which has these galleries as an axis gossips like Wall Street in big figures. One hears of a six-hundred-thousand-dollar deal in Fragonards; of a million-dollar order laid by a newly rich Western millionaire who left the details to the dealer; of a three-hundred-thousand dollar standing offer for a comparatively inferior Vermeer held by a Continental family.

As with paintings, so with tapestries, statuary, ceramics.



ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL



The business has its intrigues, its crises; on the outskirts its large frauds; even its humors. One of the most famous and costly paintings ever exhibited here arrived when a certain liberal buyer lay in the hospital, recovering from an operation. At his request the dealers sent it to his bedside where it reposed all day, guarded by an armed detective. He decided finally that the painting was not worth the price, which ran far into six digits. Had he felt better, it might have been a deal!

Yet, after all, the staple in the business of these Fifth Avenue galleries is contemporary art. From Telegraph Hill, San Francisco, to Greenwich Village, New York, when the ambitious young painter secures a Fifth Avenue exhibition he considers that he has arrived. To this mart come also the best contemporary paintings from France and Spain, Holland, Italy, and England; a foreign painter no sooner pokes his head above the horizon than he prepares to ticket his canvases for this Golconda, where connoisseurs pay prices.

Some weeks, between October and May, witness a dozen exhibitions. While some of the best European masters scorn to exhibit here, still I know a painter who maintains that the American student, educating his eye and forming his style by study of what art has done, need no longer go abroad. If he keeps up with the New York exhibitions, creditable examples of the best in every school, from primitive clear round the circle to neo-primitive, will file in time past his critical gaze. But it would be a career in itself; there are so many of them!

A spirited quarter this, with the brisk yet restrained gaiety of great drifting crowds, of chastely luxurious dress,

of powerful and elegant motor-cars running end to end and four abreast, of women on the pleasurable, exciting business of spending much money or seeing it spent. But you must visit it on Sunday, when you suffer no distraction from the animated crowds, and Fifth Avenue returns to its old function of a promenade, to appreciate the distinction of its buildings. Not only have our most eminent architects—as Cram, White, Hastings, and Warren—given it of their best; but the Fifth Avenue mansions, a few of which struggle to maintain themselves against the encroachments of business, were the flower of their period.

When in the eighties and nineties the vanguard of fashion reached up to the Park, the rich had lost their taste for the solid, square, brownstone front of the sixties and taken to French *château* architecture of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. If they were going to imitate anything, I suppose, they could have chosen no better model for the grand manner in domestic architecture. The last of these splendid mansions, squeezed now between taller buildings, present to the tourist's view façades and corners from Chambord, Chambéry, or Chenonceaux. French Renaissance of this type is an evolution from the Gothic and therefore blends with it naturally and effectively. St. Patrick's Cathedral, the simpler Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, and later that gem, St. Thomas's, are all of this order. They who erected the new buildings, such as the splendid University Club, Æolian Hall, the Gotham and St. Regis hotels, studied to preserve the harmony of the street. Even the tall Heckscher Building, pioneer sky-scraper of this district, thrusts upward thirty stories of florid Gothic decora-

tion. It wears a curious but not uncomely crown, like a gigantic cauliflower.

Let me digress to say that in this mass of stone and concrete a sparrow-hawk has for years maintained his aery. Below, virtually a shed on the roof of the building, stands a broker's office. Sometimes when the ticker is running its busiest, a sudden shadow disturbs the bidders and they look up in time to see a shower of feathers. The hawk has struck . . . A wise old bird, he never ranges northward toward the Park, where the keepers keep loaded guns for such as he.

The twin Vanderbilt houses, occupying the frontage of a block diagonally across from the cathedral, resisted the château influence; they were brownstone, of a decorated squareness, a tempered solidity. Modern architects have much to say against them; but I, in common with the populace, found them quietly satisfactory. The northernmost gave itself in 1927 into the hands of the executioner. In the other General Cornelius Vanderbilt still holds the fort. Passing down Fifth Avenue one night during the winter of 1927, I found this house all alight and surrounded with motor-cars, which waited to discharge silks and jewels and sables. It was as though I had been magicked a quarter of a century back into the past . . . The wrecker finished that year the great mansion of Cornelius Vanderbilt II, at Fifty-eighth Street; in its time pearl of all New York houses for splendor and lavish hospitality. This, frankly an adaptation of the château style, has a place in the history of American taste. The architects sent abroad for the mosaic workers, painters, and wood-carvers who executed its interior decorations. Aside from the cost of land and building, these embel-



lishments came to the sum of a million and a half dollars—and in the eighties, at that! The French mural painter who decorated Mrs. Vanderbilt's boudoir chose as his theme Aurora rising with the dawn. Having the true artistic indifference to facts, he placed his dawn on the western wall.

These imported artisans, finding better prices and prospects here than in Europe, stayed on; even sent home for more of their kind. With the prestige of the Vanderbilt job behind them, they proceeded to revise our ideas on interior decoration. Exit solemn black panels, with embossment of gilded cattails, padded plush, Brussels carpets! And now in place of this historic mansion springs upward a sky-scraper.

. . .

But Fifty-fourth Street, for half a block west from the avenue, remains a relic of old social glories. If you wish to know exactly how all the district looked a quarter of a century ago—there it is. The Rockefellers dominate this most valuable acre. On the corner rises Mrs. H. McK. Twombly's red and gray château. Behind it, fenced off from the street by iron palings and a narrow winter garden, are its stables, looking now very deserted; evidently the Rockefellers garage their cars elsewhere. Across a yard paved with stark asphalt rises for five stories the stiff, undecorated, uncompromising mansion of John D. Rockefeller, Sr. Another patch of asphalt and strip of garden border introduces the gray house, higher and more pleasant, of John D., Jr. A notable group, this; worthy seat for the richest family in New York, but a trifle bleak. Across the street, houses with chastely ornamented fronts, wide tiers of windows, and plate-glass storm-doors stand wall to wall. They suggest

ample if conservative living, tempered luxury. . . . This stranded acre might long ago have yielded to commerce but for the foresight of the Rockefellers in acquiring enough surrounding property to guard their holdings.

From any of these doorways you could throw a stone against three of the finest modern buildings in New York. At the Fifth Avenue corner is the University Club, the exterior a model of harmonious proportions, the interior of a splendid but restrained richness—the work of Stanford White and Mowbray. Across, where stood once William Rockefeller's mansion, the builders have finished Whitney Warren's Æolian Hall, a successful experiment in putting decoration and fancy into step-back architecture.

Finally, above the Rockefeller holdings rises the northern wall of renowned and fashionable St. Thomas's. Here Cram has not only recaptured the spirit of the Gothic with its capacity for defying all rules, but he has infused his work with individuality from his own mystic soul. His marble blossoms. In St. Thomas's, Cram set forth to create not a monument but a carved jewel. What he can do in the grand manner only our sons shall know when they see St. John the Divine completed. Because of its beauty as much as because of the wealth and social position of its congregation, St. Thomas's is the smart bridal church of New York. On some days in June the beadle runs off fashionable weddings end to end, and all afternoon crowds of eager, excited women wait on the pavement for a glimpse of that composed little face in a filmy cloud of white which is the latest bride.

All the world knows, perhaps, about the standing joke

of St. Thomas's—the dollar sign worked into the tracery above the Bride's Door. A young designer in Cram's studios "put it over," and his prank went for nearly three years undiscovered. When at last the newspapers exposed it, St. Thomas's had the sense of humor to let it stand!

## *Chapter XXII*

### THE MELTING POT OF THE RICH

FOR young ambition, entering the Great Metropolis in search of fortune, the Grand Central Station stands as one of two main gateways. Daily in the crowds that gush from its train exits walks some subdued, gasping young man or other in a ready-made suit or some confident flapper in a mail-order coat, who twenty years from now will sit at the governing center of one or another great circle of Manhattan. For nine tenths of them, wealth is the ultimate goal—wealth and the luxury or position that it implies. But as they drift and jostle with the straining current across the great main hall, the goal lies behind them. In the new, strange Manhattan arisen since the Great War, Park Avenue has begun to succeed Fifth Avenue as the synonym for those two words which one likes to run in quotation-marks to show that they are not part of his usual vocabulary: “society” and “exclusiveness.” And to this Eden of every normal American’s desire, the Grand Central Station with its surrounding group of impressive tall buildings blocks all approach from the south.

Impressive I have called these buildings; I cannot say much else in praise. Over three or four blocks they rise so

high that on some mornings when the fog is blowing out to sea the clouds puff from their tops as from a peak of the Sierra; yet so square and bulky that one loses the impression of breath-taking altitude. This, and the coolness of their geometrical forms might be a virtue, but for their monotony. They are the last manifestation of the old order in sky-scrapers; just after the era which produced them, the city began planning its permanent future and ordained step-back architecture for tall buildings. The foreign spectator, regarding this American phenomenon with fresh and unspoiled vision, must notice first of all the multiplicity of windows. They glare at you with a million eyes; they seem to ask, like the old song, "What right have you on Broadway?" Yet even these impersonal bulks have romantic touches. Here and there, far above the rows and tiers of windows, lies a recessed balcony. As you walk eastward on Forty-second Street there confront you—light, proportionate, beautiful—the bridge of that automobile causeway by which the rich curve round the station to their domain in Park Avenue. Once I glanced up just as a troop of cavalry, traversing this airy passage, made a reddish-black silhouette against a gray morning sky. Helmeted, their pieces slung over their backs, their pennons drooping in the windless air, they might have been medieval men-at-arms crossing a moat. And as you make a jog through Vanderbilt Avenue on your way to the sleeping-place of wealth, your way is blocked by the light twin arches of Marguery's courtyard, affording glimpse of a garden.

Housed amid this city of the air lies such diversities of business and pleasure, luxury and necessity, as marks no

other important district in New York. The hotels claim first attention. The Belmont, facing the station, stands a sturdy relic. Its compeer of fifteen years ago, the Manhattan—from which Roosevelt directed his Bull Moose campaign—has yielded ground for a sky-scraper. But in the bulky blocks to westward of the station glitter those hotels whose modest signs conjure up to the outlanders all the wealth and display of New York—as the Ritz, whose name has passed into current slang, the Biltmore, the Chatham, the Roosevelt, the Algonquin with its literary and dramatic associations. And in the great tangle of buildings which rise above the station resides the Commodore, modern glorification of a railroad hotel. The Middle Westerner experiences when first he enters one of these gilded hostelries a slight sense of disappointment. Is this all Manhattan has to offer! A little bigger and livelier perhaps than his pet hotel in Chicago or Cleveland or Detroit, but when it comes to convenience and style . . . In nothing does the rich and comfort-loving interior so crowd the metropolis as in this matter of modern hotels. The best in the world, measured by all standards, is probably the Davenport at Spokane, Washington.

Into this mass the up-town Wall Street thrusts its offshoots; and through it run sky-scrapers which house a complexity of business from stocks and bonds to facial massage and physical culture. Over it, topping the pleasant low façade and unwinking clock of the Grand Central Station, looms the Grand Central Palace, Manhattan's chief hall for expositions. In that tangle lie even a permanent exhibit of paintings and sculpture, and an art school!



Through the cañons below surges the most diverse crowd in all New York, the most rapid and restless. The dwellers of the suburbs, pent for an hour or so in a day-coach, release their stored energies as they step forth from the station in a fast, energetic walk; the traffickers between office and office follow their pace unconsciously. Here you may see women who are the hothouse flowers of civilization floating up Vanderbilt Avenue to the great hotels; and for the other extreme family gangs of foreign laborers, their kerchiefed women dragging weary children, on the way home from some contract job to the north. Between these extremes there rush and jostle and fight for passage with streams of taxicabs every touch of color in the mosaic of Manhattan—clerks in spruce, cheap clothing, saucy flappers of office-girls, wives of the suburbs on shopping or *matinée* bent, foreigners in strange raiment from the tenement population to the eastward, mechanics with their tools, vaudeville teams scurrying back from ventures on the road, smoothly dressed, smooth-mannered business men, painted ladies, ill dressed drifters with loose mouths and relaxed hands, confidence men, thieves . . .

The human symphony rises to its diapason as you enter the inconspicuous doorway of Grand Central Station, traverse the waiting-room, and stand looking down upon the broad and high central hall. Those interiors of the two great railroad stations rank with the architectural triumphs of New York. The Pennsylvania is the more formally impressive; it resembles a cathedral. The Grand Central, somewhat less splendid but more human, has the quality of a palace. All day and all night the lively clamor of excited

voices echoes and reëchoes from a ceiling which imitates the sky; and a brisk crowd which typifies not only New York but the whole continent makes flowing patterns, like currents in water, across a cemented floor set in brass with the signs of the zodiac.

But I have paused too long at the gateway. Coming out of this clamor, roar, and bustle, traverse Vanderbilt Avenue, turn to the right behind the station, and look northward. There extends before you a superbly wide avenue—really two highways divided, a few blocks beyond, by ovals of lawn and garden which stretch like a string of beads to the limit of vision. The New York Central System seems to break off abruptly with the rear wall of the station; no sign of all the yards and switching tracks necessary to a major terminus. These lie underfoot; though you realize it only when a taxicab strikes one of the metal strips at the crossings and the pavement trembles as with the ghost of an earthquake.

To the right of this superb driveway stands the Railroad Y.M.C.A., last outpost of commerce or utility in Park Avenue and not its least beautiful building; beyond that, the decorated Byzantine of the new St. Bartholomew's Church. For the rest, on both sides shoot skyward only walls of those cream or buff or terra-cotta tapestry-brick effects which the rich American loves—walls broken now and then with ornament to vary the monotony of windows, or with recessed balconies. This is Park Avenue, new quarter of the very rich, new goal for the supremely ambitious American business man, new bonanza, Golconda, El Dorado for the purveyors of luxury along Fifth Avenue.

Behind these walls lies embodied more wealth than ever before blessed one little area of the planet; within them dwell in a luxury that travels on ball-bearings those who govern, at this uncertain moment in history, the world's business. Beside Park Avenue, the Faubourg St.-Germain is a beggar and Mayfair a barmaid.

Walls, walls, light and airy, managed and ornamented with the best skill of the most cunning designers. And yet Park Avenue lacks something which should appertain to the last word in a street of taste and fashion. I could never lay my finger on this unsatisfactory point until in imagination I walked over New York with an American painter who, many years abroad, had just reviewed his native city with fresh but understanding eyes. The sky-scraper mass of lower Manhattan? A conception for a Michelangelo become an angel! The step-back buildings like the New York Telephone? A creation, an absolute creation of the soil, and wonderful! Park Avenue? There he paused; and seemed to begin far from the subject.

"On the Champs-Élysées," he said, or in Mayfair, I feel myself a part of the street. Spiritually I seem to own a piece of it. Park Avenue—beautiful, yes, and absolutely American—but a little scornful. It says to me, 'You pauper, what are you doing here?' In Mayfair and in the fine districts of Paris and Rome, you see façades, but in Park Avenue only walls. A façade welcomes; a wall forbids. A curious manifestation in a democracy, isn't it?"

Yet as Park Avenue builds further and further northward, the new fashion in New York architecture begins to manifest itself. Step-backs appear, breaking the monotonies

of wall and window. Finally, at the northwest corner of Fifty-seventh Street arises the Ritz, a genuine tower building as comely as any in Manhattan. Its easy, proportionate narrowings bear spikes and flèches; it leaps upward like a flame. In contemplation of its beauty one loses the sense of exclusiveness and exclusion.

Park Avenue is a recent and sudden phenomenon. They who like me abandoned New York in 1914 for the line or the back areas of the European War left "society" ensconced on Fifth Avenue, stretching upward from the Park corner toward the Museum. That thoroughfare and the cross streets which flanked it to eastward, were the sole haunt of fashion. Returning in 1919, we heard for the first time the name of Park Avenue as a synonym for wealth, and walked round the station to behold this grandiose conception in the process of building. Only the newly rich, I thought to myself; the seasoned families will never live on apartment-house terms, like larvæ in a honey-comb. And yet—every month some member of the "exclusive set" was giving up his mansion on Fifth Avenue or the near East Seventies and "buying a duplex" in a Park Avenue apartment-house. After the depression of 1920 came hectic building. But in the area bounded by Forty-second Street, Fifty-ninth Street, Fifth Avenue, and Park Avenue there rose in the next five years not a half a dozen separate dwellings. That mode of living—once held to be the only way for a gentleman—is passing rapidly out of fashion.

Various trends of the times account for this singular and sudden phenomenon. First, it is a matter of pure business. The land bordering the Park on its eastern side has

become as valuable as though floored in solid gold. Taxes on the separate house drain all but the fattest purses. The owner can sell his land, buy a "simplex" or "duplex" in a modern apartment-house, pocket a profit, and economize on his yearly domestic budget. Maintaining a separate house implies individual care and trouble—such as problems of heat and repairs. The furnaces of the rich get out of order like yours and mine. The apartment-house, on the other hand, takes its heat from a central plant as reliable as a municipal electric works. Native Americans seldom "go into service"; and the immigration restrictions have reduced the foreign supply. Directing a corps of thirty servants, even with the help of a housekeeper, has become a career. In a coöperative apartment, the management shoulders at least half of this burden. A rich house, with its jewels and furnishings, is a mark for criminals. It needs guarding. One detective—a specialist—attends to that matter for all the families in a Park Avenue apartment-house.)

There are other causes, more remote. Since the seventies and eighties, when rich New York hostesses fought a ladies' war in which balls and receptions were the battles and skirmishes, our world has filled up with a number of things; the labor of social supremacy is no longer worth the scant glory. Part of the rich have made the country place on Long Island the "family seat," and the town house or apartment merely a convenience for the height of the season. Characteristically the rest inhabit New York only a few months in each year. Expressing the unquiet spirit of our times—or is it the enterprising joy of our times—they jump from Park Avenue to the Riviera or Palm



Beach, then to the country establishment, thence perhaps to our Southwestern desert, the South Seas, the Orient. So, with one thing or another, the movement to the apartment de luxe has become a craze.

Faintly forbidding though these habitations be on the outside, within they have individuality and warmth. Sometimes all the owners of a coöperative apartment belong to the same social layer. But my lady of millions need no more associate with the other tenants in her house than you or I, fellow-pauper, with the people in the flat upstairs. Each apartment has its separate and private elevator; often, its separate and private entrance. If the lobby be coöperative, the proper retinue of liveried servants open the door, bow you in. Always in the background of this lobby stands a quiet man in quiet clothes; he is the detective, guarding the house against jewel-robbers. From the elevator doors of the richer and more expensive apartment, you step into a hall like that of any grand house; you must look out of the window to realize that you are dwelling with the eagle. The individual, modern decoration and furnishing of these interiors support a colony of prosperous craftsmen along Madison and Lexington avenues.

Final touch of strange luxury is the roof-house, the "cote"; sometimes merely a super-cottage surrounded by painfully cultivated gardens, but often a veritable mansion. Here, twenty inhabited stories above ground, the circle swings full turn; the tenant has achieved a detachment impossible to any dwelling set on the earth. There are no neighbors to his right and left; only the tinted air above Manhattan. Though hundreds of strangers dwell just under-



foot, his only connection with his six million fellow-citizens is the opening to his private elevator-shaft. From any supreme elevation on the edge of this region—like the tops of the Heckscher Building or the Hotel Shelton—these roof-houses cut the sky-line in every direction. Once, standing by the pinnacle of the Heckscher, I glimpsed something which made me think that I was living in Mother Goose. Distrusting my eyes, I went into the broker's office under the spike and borrowed a field-glass. It was all true. There, chewing her cud at the back door of a cottage cocked twenty stories in air, lay a Jersey cow! I fancied that I read in her distant eyes the anxious and nervous expression of an animal dragged out of its native habitat—like a lion in a cage or a tethered eagle.

Who live in these composite steel and cement palaces? All sorts, the one common factor being wealth. The Park Avenue Association has issued of late some interesting figures. The average net income along the Avenue is \$75,000 a year. A mere \$50,000 a year is bitter poverty. Its possessor can afford no more than \$10,000 a year for rent; and that brings him only a flat. A really desirable duplex or triplex apartment will cost perhaps \$35,000 a year. If the tenant prefers to buy a duplex or triplex, the initial cost and the decoration may come to a quarter of a million—to say nothing of furnishings.

But aristocracy and society? They reside in Park Avenue too; the long-arrived and the newly arrived wedged among the strugglers. Society in modern New York has become something of an anomaly, a paradox. This is the only metropolis of the world which is not also a political





P. H. ...

PARK AVENUE AND THE RITZ TOWER

capital. In London, Rome, or Madrid, society groups itself loosely about the court and the hereditary nobility. Even in France the republic has for the stable basis of its aristocracy some denatured remnants of Bourbon and Bonapartist rule—the faded, titled folk of the Faubourg St.-Germain, the louder Napoleonic set across the river. And a third circle has for its center the high personages of the republic.

New York, while it was still only a provincial metropolis, supplied this lack by a rigid grouping of such pioneer families—mostly Knickerbocker by blood—as had held to the family money. “Seasoned wealth” is one good definition of aristocracy. The insiders, in a circle whose main visible qualification is money, must needs draw the lines tight and fast. The Duchesse de Gramont or the Duchess of Westminster is always a duchess. She can afford to unbend, to associate with pleasing persons from the lower orders, secure in the thought that if any one presumes, she can retreat to the impregnable trench of her hereditary right. The New York aristocracy had no such refuge. They created an artificial line. So many people were in; the rest out. The standard was membership in certain clubs or invitation to certain imposing functions like the Patriarch’s ball or the famous Bradley-Martin ball.

Such a system needed leadership. The monarch, in the later nineteenth century, was always some woman like the elder Mrs. Astor or Mrs. Stuyvesant Fish. In the Renaissance era, a supremely able woman had only two outlets for her talents: sainthood and social power. By the Victorian era, this situation had changed very little. In the twentieth century, however, anything that a man may do with his

brains, a woman may at least attempt. Social leadership as a career makes little appeal to women able enough to succeed. There are so many other fascinating things to do! When Mrs. Fish's dead hand dropped the scepter, no one who could lift it cared for the honor. The old aristocracy still exists; and though units lie scattered through North Washington Square, Gramercy Park, Sutton Place, the fringes of the Morgan house below the Station, mostly they dwell in and about Park Avenue. However, they seem no longer to delimit their existence by definite barriers. Even their clubs have long ago opened to the rap of new wealth. The line is intangible, spiritual. But the newly rich, transferring to Manhattan their winnings in Oklahoma oil, Detroit automobiles, or Arizona mines, realize with considerable irritation and baffled pride that it still exists!

"Aristocracy" and "society" are in modern New York two terms of different meaning. In the heated activity of the post-war period what was once a solid has vaporized into a gas. At the center of this cloud sits J. Beeckman Jones—he has shed his Mr.; he is "in," definitely. At the edge, bearing his bright new thirty millions, struggles Mr. J. B. Jones—oh, how he longs to see his name in the paper without that "Mr.!" Does he breathe as yet the intoxicating, perfumed vapor, or only the common outer air? No one can tell; certainly not the Social Register!

Perhaps in another generation or so the pendulum may swing backward. Some one may find leadership again worth while; may gather up the wealth, refined by time, of these new-comers, fuse it with the remaining wealth of the patoots, recreate a cohesive set. In the meantime, three ele-

ments lie jumbled together in Park Avenue: aristocracy, mere "society," and the aspiring. Behind those high, rich walls, as behind the fire-escapes of Delancey Street, a melting-pot is at work.



## *Chapter XXIII*

### THE PLAYGROUND OF LOVERS

ENTERING the nineteenth century third in population and wealth among American cities, New York had before the Civil War outstripped all rivals; and in two generations more she was become metropolis of the world. "Central situation," say the historians of business, and "magnificent harbor." But if you review in cold blood the natural resources of the Atlantic coast, you will find Philadelphia more centrally situated, especially as regards those vital resources of the modern world, coal and iron. Also, her port on the Delaware is susceptible of development into a harbor ample for the main gate to American commerce. No, New York shot ahead not so much because of these advantages as because during the early nineteenth century she had in her mixed population the original Rotarians—their motto a Bigger, Better, and Busier Manhattan. When Canal Street was really a canal and the ultimate outpost of civilization, they had pledged faith in their city by laying it out clear to the wilderness by Spuyten Duyvil. And while vegetable gardens still possessed the sites around what is now St. Patrick's Cathedral, they bought nearly eight hundred and fifty acres—the area of five or six productive eastern

farms—and gardened it for a park worthy the metropolis of which they dreamed. That is the point toward which I have been working—Central Park.

General Veilé, engineer, and his collaborating landscape architects, Olmsted and Vaux, finished their job in 1858. It cost, records say, \$415,000,000—a staggering sum for those days; and by this alone I measure the foresight and enterprise of nineteenth-century New York. What the land may be worth to-day, I dread to estimate. As our forests of steel and cement grew up for miles and miles northward of 110th Street, our elected rulers had to brace themselves against constant attempts, both open and insidious, to violate the park. Real-estate interests tried to whittle away its edges. Promoters of new city enterprises marked it as the site for municipal buildings. But the successive administrations—Democratic and Republican, Tammany and Reform—have stood firmly by this pride of Manhattan.

Veilé, who coöperated with the Almighty in creating Central Park, was a simple engineer and nature-lover. His landscape gardeners did little more than coax the native hills, rock ledges, and forests into forms and contours adapted to the public pleasure. The sixties and seventies added an atrocity or two, like the old drab arsenal which is now the store-house of the Park menagerie. But time and custom heal all wounds, even of architecture. If the city tore down the arsenal now, we should miss it; just as we should miss William Shakspeare, Bobby Burns and the other chromos in bronze with which various generations of tasteless givers and blind city fathers have bedizened the walks. But in the main, Central Park stands as a reminder of what

Manhattan Island was when the white man came—tender hills with stern outcroppings of rock ledges, noble forest, meadows mad with fertility of grasses and herbs, limpid streams, tiny lakes whose surfaces palpitated with the play of wild-fowl. Except for climate, the Manhattan of 1600 must have been an earthly paradise.

For a generation, Central Park shared renown with Boston Common. The Common figured in the school-books as cradle of the Revolution; but New York was already the publishing center for the country, and the Park got itself advertised. As a boy, I lived at the summit of the Colorado Rockies. I had as a playground the whole Siwash Range, with its glaciers, forests, and upland meadows. And yet when I read of Central Park in "Harper's Young People," I imagined it as a kind of children's Eden, more beautiful and wonderful than anything I had ever known! Then other municipalities, with whole prairies in which to expand, set about to show this squeezed little island. Rochester made herself the city of flowers; Portland, the city of roses; Kansas City and Minneapolis stretched their parked driveways for miles and miles over the bluffs of their rivers; Boston bit into the New England country-side until to-day one may drive for twenty miles along the Charles without once leaving municipal territory; sheer across the reclaimed sand-hills, San Francisco ran the palms and pines of her Golden Gate Park five miles to the sea. Where now were the eight hundred acres of little Manhattan? Yet admitting all this, the fact remains that Central Park has a thrilling quality which the more pretentious parks in the smaller cities and in our outlying boroughs have missed altogether.

That quality is contrast. You stand regarding a patch of forest, a rise of igneous rock, or a limpid little waterfall which perpetuates Manhattan as it was before the white man clothed and polluted it; you look up, and our gigantic towers stare you in the face. At night, the rectangle of light confining the horizon produces a *Doré*—if *Doré* had illustrated fairy-tales. Just as striking are the human contrasts. Down the bridle-path comes an aristocratically lean horse bearing an aristocratically slender woman rider; the flower of graceful breeding, equine and human. And suddenly a rag-bag which has slumped itself unnoticed on to your bench stirs and whines out a plea for the price of a sandwich. On the edge of the Mall sits a woman uniformed as a trained nurse, gently agitating a smart perambulator where sleeps beneath a veil the heir to somebody's millions. As though an object so precious needed double guard, his young mother, groomed to the last hair, reads on the next bench. Approaches a woman wearing a shawl over her swarthy, toil-lined Italian features; from the bundle of blankets in her arms sparkle the bright black eyes of her baby. They are less than women if they do not smile each on the other's treasure and, across the gulf of race and wealth, start a mothers' meeting. Down the pathway two by two advance a company of nuns at exercise, the beads of their girdles swinging with the pace of their measured walk. A loose-mouthed young man in a cap and a tight-fitting overcoat steps respectfully aside to give them room; then takes a hypodermic needle furtively from his pocket, inspects it, and, seeing your eyes upon him, tries to pretend that this was only an accidental motion. A little boy, tailor-made

from his birth, stands at the feet of his urging nurse timidly luring a suspicious squirrel with a peanut. A little girl with stringy hair and a coat rescued from a garbage-pail stops skipping rope to break into this wooing with brutally frank suggestion and criticism. Down on the great playground a lad with the marks of a private school on his clothes and accent is pitching curves to a laughing, jesting negro. On the courts by the reservoir, a Chinese boy dives smiling after a low ball driven by a young Juno of an Anglo-Saxon girl. Humanly considered, Central Park at any hour of the day or night gathers into a democratic herd the diversity of New York—which is as much diversity as you can find anywhere west of Suez.

Except at the northern rim, wealth hedges it in on all sides. To the south lie the Plaza Hotel and a row of comfortable old apartment-houses; to the east, the fine mansions, now yielding to apartment-houses equally fine, of residential Fifth Avenue; on the other side the somewhat over-decorated affluence of Central Park West. It has twenty gates, all christened by the Park Department with names which no one ever uses. However, the main entrances are but two; from the Plaza—a term designating a spot as well as a hotel—and from Columbus Circle. Of these, the first is the more popular. In the foreground as you approach lies Hastings's and Bitter's wide and pleasant Pulitzer fountain. Beyond that strides upon you a golden Victory, leading the mounted golden figure of General Sherman, Saint-Gaudens's most famous statue and possibly the finest monument in New York. Enter beside its pedestal; but turn to the left, and descend to the first and busiest of the lakes.





THE AVENUE AT SIXTIETH STREET





Here the pavement of Fifty-ninth Street rises fifty feet above you. Over that towers the bulk of the Plaza; still higher the new Savoy-Plaza and Netherlands across the Avenue; and, beyond, the top spike of the beautiful, graceful Ritz Tower. By the trick of the terrain, these buildings bulk to heaven; nowhere else even in Manhattan do walls seem so dizzily, menacingly high. By contrast that corner of the Park looks like one of those dwarf gardens the Japanese make. Stop a moment by the lake. If it be clear, frosty winter weather, the red ball is up; the ice rings with a thousand skates. In milder seasons, the surface is crowded as for a water carnival with swan-boats for the children, skiffs for their elders. A tenant in one of the old apartment-houses overhanging this wall of the Park tells me that he always knows when a United States battle-ship is visiting port from the number of blue-jacket uniforms on the surface of this lake. Just ashore from a six months' voyage on immeasurable seas, the gob collects his girl and makes straight for this handkerchief-size pond!

This is a sporting-ground of the populace. Walk fifty yards back on your trail, repass the Sherman monument, and behold another contrast. A short stretch of walk with the warning sign "for equestrians only" leads to a sanded oval. There, all afternoon, stand a company of slim-legged, uniformed grooms, holding saddle-horses with satiny skins, clipped fetlocks, and polished hoofs. If the day be chilly, these pampered steeds are blanketed in the red and white checks of the exclusive Riding Club. That is, people tell me it is exclusive. Reared myself on the Western style of riding where you have your feet under you and sit on the saddle

not the air, I have never ridden in the Park; inbred prejudice holds me back. I have therefore no discrimination regarding the riding set. Certainly, as they gather up the reins from the waiting, respectful groom, give the dancing mount one reassuring pat on the neck, vault feather-light into the saddle and trot away, they seem the last word in smartness. Twenty years ago, the women all rode side-saddle; two grooms stood by to help them mount, and there was much fuss with arranging skirts before the steed curveted and started. But the cross-saddle has conquered, here as elsewhere. The modern riding girl sits a young centaur astride her mount. And still now and then a middle-aged woman whose long skirt flows modestly over her stirrup pulls up at the Riding Club oval, slips her booted foot into the hands of a groom, dismounts, hastily rearranges her skirt to shoe-top length, and strides past the perpetual crowd of watching, admiring small boys with the embarrassed but defiant air of a lady determined to be a lady no matter what the cost to her finer feelings.

The bridle-path is wound through all the park in such cunning fashion that an equestrian need never dispute passage with pedestrians and chauffeurs. And once away from the Riding Club corner it becomes mixed, democratic. Into it thrust themselves the learners from the riding academies to the south and west, very correct as to costume, very insecure as to seat; sometimes you will see a girl rigged like the equestrienne of the high-school horses in the circus clutching hysterically at a handful of mane. Again it will be a whole class from some of the fashionable girls' schools, riding two by two and flanked by watchful instructors.

Scratchier costumes betray the riders of hired horses, genuine lovers of the sport. Sometimes, spite of their English pad-saddles, they employ the western seat, sticking out the trot. Here comes a McClellan saddle, old army model. By his seat as much as by his spruce gray mustache and his erect shoulders you identify the rider as a retired army officer keeping his waist-line down. And perhaps—sight for sore western eyes—there lopes into view a lean, ewe-necked cayuse, bearing a horned saddle and a young man in overalls and short top-boots who sits the leather as though glued to it. A cowboy this, in port with a cargo of cattle, and giving his steed a little exercise before the confinement of the return voyage.

That other main gate opens not from the elegancies of Fifth Avenue but from the roar and bustle and industry of Eighth Avenue and Broadway. Here, too, the sky-scrapers are rising, higher and higher with each building spasm, to make contrast with the primeval rocks, the forests, and the meadows which stretch just beyond the Columbus monument. This is par excellence the automobile entrance to the park. Appropriately so; in the course of twenty-four hours, traffic experts tell me, more motor vehicles pass Columbus Circle than any other spot in the world. Indeed it has become to this new transportation system of America what Mile-stone Number One in the Forum was to Imperial Rome. From it the Blue Books calculate the distance on all their thousand routes to Boston, Quebec, Chicago, Jacksonville, Santa Fé, San Francisco. Once in midsummer, the police tell me, a dilapidated Ford, spilling luggage, blankets, tents, and babies, came wheezing behind an Indiana

license into the traffic-stream of Columbus Circle. At the risk of a dozen collisions the driver edged his way up to the side of the traffic policeman.

"Where's Columbus Circle?" he asked.

"Where you are," replied the policeman, "here!"

The driver gazed round him.

"Goshamighty!" he said, "and that garage man at Yonkers told me Columbus Circle was the automobile camping-ground for New York!"

Beyond the Columbus monument and the over-pedestaled *Maine* monument rises a course of native rock ledges, a heaven for children in the climbing stage. From its foot runs the first of the park meadows. No grass grows upon it, however; the Park Department holds this area sacred to baseball. It is the small boy's own corner. Every fair afternoon from March to December witnesses a dozen scrub games at once, so that the home runs from one imaginary field streak over the base-lines of the next. And not only of afternoons; all summer long, sunrise beholds youths and young men getting a bit of exercise and recreation before going to work. For Central Park rises early.

An unfortunate early riser myself, I can testify to that. On many a morning I have emerged into the rattle of the milk-wagons and gone for a walk in the Park. But be I ever so early, I am never first on the field. Even at six o'clock I encounter pursy, puffy gentlemen in sweaters, and women in thick coats and mannish shoes. These, I always assume, are the reducers, supplementing diet and massage with exercise before breakfast. Already the keeper of the Park farm has finished his milking and is turning out the city's prize flock

of sheep into the upper meadows. On a spring morning the new white lambs bounce like wind-blown thistle-down across the greensward. Approaching the pathway round the reservoir, you seem to be witnessing an interminable marathon; young men in the motion of an easy run flash regularly against the morning sky. As you draw near, you realize by a cauliflower ear, a twisted nose, or a spasm of shadow-boxing that these are pugilists in preliminary training. For champions or near-champions, training quarters in the country; but for the rank and file of preliminary fighters, a corner in one of the gymnasiums along Eighth Avenue and the pathways of the Park. Bundled in sweaters, mufflers, heavy gloves, they perspire to the melting-point. You may perceive also an elderly man in rough clothes lolling on a bench. He seems to take no interest whatsoever in the morning landscape until one particular group of embryo Tunneys passes. Then he snaps out of his languor and advises them to stop loafing or informs them that they are not having tea with the duchess. He is that tyrant, the trainer and manager.

Of a summer morning, girls and boys in their late teens fill the tennis-courts. They are office employees, getting in one set before the inexorable hour of the subway rush. And already the riders are trotting or loping down the bridle-path. For the most part these are elderly and overfed-looking men exercising under doctor's orders before tackling the serious and interesting work of the day. The rest ride in couples, boy and girl together—lovers doubtless, who in the rush and bustle of lives too full, find their only chance for togetherness in these tender hours of the morning. They



start off the day appropriately; every hour is wooing hour in these pleasant fields. Did any New York love-affair ever come to fruition without at least one episode in Central Park?

By eight, the automobile driveways begin to fill—taxi-cabs rushing to early morning trains and the vanguard of motor commuters from Westchester and Yonkers. When the confusion of a city getting to work has passed, the first perambulators begin timidly to push through the twenty-three gates; from then until noon, Central Park will belong to the budding generation. On the eastern edge, nurses in neat uniforms man the perambulators; on the western, nurses in plain clothes; on the northern—but here they are go-carts—mother or an older sister. Everywhere in the pavilions or on the benches among the rocky hillocks sit nurses in groups, with children of the walking age playing about their feet. Mid-afternoon, and the close of school brings the eight-year-olds and the ten-year-olds in hordes; the well dressed children of the park-fringe first, then the dingier and sturdier little people of the tenements. Until dinner-time draws them home, they sprinkle the grass thicker than the English sparrows. A thousand skipping-ropes make arcs in air. Ten thousand roller-skates crunch on the cement walks; the world shrills and laughs with childish voices.

This even in the coldest days of winter. And especially in winter, the focus of the children's invasion is that rattle-trap old group of wooden buildings down by the late arsenal, where the city keeps a mere sample of its unsurpassed menagerie in Bronx Park and where in pleasant weather one

may have a ride on a pony for ten cents. Comfort accounts for this, partly. The menagerie lies in a hollow; a course of rocky hills shields it from the biting west winds. But more potent is the pull of an animal on the childish imagination. We elders, I suppose, take most interest in the lions, the tiger, and the bison. But not the children. For them the monkey house and especially its three fascinating chimpanzees; and, after that, the barn-yard with its cow, its donkey, its flock of geese, its litter of little pink pigs. Here, by consent of a benevolent municipality, flourishes that sport forbidden in the fastidious menageries—feeding peanuts to the hay-animals. Toward the middle of Saturday afternoon, the sport languishes; by now the four-footed beggars are literally fed up. I tried them out one Saturday evening. None would accept my bounty except a languid buffalo which looked merely conscientious, and the hippopotamus, which is too stupid to know when he has had enough.

Six o'clock, and the driveways run end to end with commuter cars hurrying homeward. Seven o'clock, and save for drifters who are not dining that night, the Park is deserted. Eight o'clock, and two by two the lovers come. From then until the early risers begin their reducing exercises, to them the Park belongs. For, I repeat, no love-affair of Manhattan—among high or low, rich or poor—ever ran its normal course without at least one tender episode in Central Park.

## *Chapter XXIV*

### MORGAN ISLAND

WHEN J. Pierpont Morgan the elder moved up town from the region of Stuyvesant Square, he chose as his permanent home the crest of Murray Hill. This, in prehistoric days, was the chief eminence of Central Manhattan; even yet, elderly pedestrians puff and nurse their knees as they ascend it. For two hundred years, farms renowned for their orchard fruits occupied its pleasant slopes. In 1776 the farm-house broke for a day into history. Just to its northwest, the British regulars were ranging themselves desultorily to cut off the retreat of Washington's beaten Continentals. The American artillery, massed on that knoll where is now the up-town Wall Street, was firing desperately to keep a loophole in the cordon. Meantime, at the farm-house Dame Murray, an ardent patriot at heart, was entertaining Lord Howe, Lord Cornwallis, and their staff with her good home-made cakes, her heady home-made wine, and her sprightly home-made conversation. The British officers rose at last, wiped their lips, and shook out the laces of their sleeves. But Dame Murray had still another trick in her bag. The little serving-maid, to whom the officers had been paying superior attention, sang beautifully. She



THE SOMBER BROWNSTONE MANSION



knew a song just over from London—"Sally in Our Alley." Would the gentlemen like to hear it? Warmed with wine and flirtation, they settled down, listened through the seven long stanzas, even encored the performance. When they emerged, the battle-roar was dying down, and the clouds of black smoke were clearing away from the hilltops below. The British army, for lack of sharp staff direction, had let the Continentals slip through to their stand at McGowan's Pass—even that virulent gentleman rebel, George Washington of Virginia. At least so runs a legend which has just enough support to make it almost history. Let us endeavor to believe it.

Three quarters of a century later, Murray Hill made history again, this time less dramatically but more authentically. For though the seed of baseball sprouted in Madison Square, on Murray Hill it found its nursery. The summit was comparatively flat; and a few slopes and undulations did not greatly hamper a game in which first bounce meant "out" and the score mounted to something like 96-78. Here were organized the famous amateur teams such as the Knickerbockers and Pioneers, whose members in the course of our Western emigration, or of the Civil War, taught the "New York game" to the whole United States.

Fashion and wealth it was which drove baseball out to the Elysian Field of Hoboken. When at about the period of our Civil War, Butler wrote his "Nothing to Wear," he domiciled his modish Flora McFlimsey in Madison Square. Northward from this center, the sumptuous dwellings of the rich ran up Fifth Avenue and Madison Avenue and im-



pinged finally on Murray Hill. And Morgan, following the trend, erected his new brownstone mansion at Thirty-sixth Street and Madison Avenue, the exact summit. He, and certain rich families which grouped themselves round him, long kept this area sacred to luxurious residence. But even Morgan underestimated Manhattan's capacity for growth. Before his death in 1913, the rear-guard of the fashionable district in Fifth Avenue had crossed Thirty-fourth Street, and the vanguard was reaching up the Park border even to the Metropolitan Museum. The Rockefellers, as I have shown already, dwell now in an island of fashion and splendour living surrounded by a brilliant, tossing sea of commerce. So, by coincidence, does that other family whose name spells power and supremacy in finance, the Morgans.

And of the two, Morgan Island presents the more startling contrast. To north-eastward, the Grand Central Station and its subsidiary masses break abruptly into Park Avenue. The modern fashionable quarter of towering, complex palaces begins beyond the station. Here below, Park Avenue resembles a branch which, cut off from its parent stem, has begun to wither and die. It is bright and beautiful yet, what with its façades of cheerful, light-red brick, its chaste, reserved ornamentation of doorways and balconies. But it is experiencing the first stage of decadence. Small clubs and institutions, unable as yet to afford special and pretentious quarters, display their modest brass signs or fly their monogrammed flags; and before this or that fine doorway stands a movable wooden sign advertising a floor to let. For a block eastward, the three cross streets—Thirty-sixth, Thirty-seventh, and Thirty-eighth—still present to the view

four and five story houses with American basements. Through their glass doors one may glimpse the stiff forms of footmen uniformed like tropical wasps. Here a few families of ripened wealth—such as the Morgans, the Hoyts, and the Osbornes—hold out against the mad modern rush to apartment palaces beyond the Grand Central Station. A step more, and on the corner of Thirty-sixth Street and Madison Avenue the riveter is rattling on a huge apartment-house; as though northern Park Avenue, despairing of bringing these conservatives into its golden circle, were coming to them. Still a few more steps, and you are in the upward thrust and the roar of modern Madison Avenue. Banked down the hill as far as Madison Square lie massive wholesale houses, black in the shadows.

Northward the building-masses rise to those summits which guard the Grand Central Station. The comely, step-back Heckscher Office Building guards the island on its northwest corner. Diagonally across the street, the Morgan group begins in the mansion of the existing J. Pierpont Morgan; brownstone, yet so managed as to give that refractory material some lightness and warmth. A garden, fighting bravely against gases and vibration, slopes southward down the hill. This ended once in the harmonizing mansion of Morgan, Sr.; that site is now a gash in the buff soil of Manhattan. But eastward its pleached paths wander to the building which gives the whole district its character, to the one perfect great thing on Manhattan Island—the Morgan Library.

McKim, Mead & White built its shell, a temple of white marble, most fair and proportionate yet with an air of

secret exclusiveness. Its niches in place of windows give this effect; for it takes its light from overhead. The loggia above the wide, gradually ascending steps centers in magnificent sixteenth-century doors of blossoming bronze, beside which stretch Weinman's allegorical bas-reliefs, sculptured out of the white marble. And at the corner stand two life-size Greek statues. Guards look you over critically as you enter the iron gates; the doorkeeper opens but a crack until he has inspected your credentials. For here is treasure, much more valuable, in money alone, than the vault-contents of most New York banks. Then you step behind the bronze doors; and the perfection of the thing bursts upon you.

You have entered a semicircular hall, classic in style, softly mottled marble in material. Over the door at the apex of the circle broods a Lucca della Robbia Virgin; perhaps the best exemplar of this tender master in clay and glaze which ever crossed the ocean. Pedestaled before this, all dead black and sheer strength, Cellini's bust of Pescari confronts you; and flanking it two tall pillars of opaque turquoise blue, bearing shallow urns of carved crystal. And in the corner behind you a Greek Bacchus of the first century B.C. holds his wine-bowl and his grapes. Above, the light comes through the interstices in a vaulted ceiling of Mowbray, the painter who executed the ceilings of the University Club, and who seems to have escaped the fame he deserves. Nothing else except a pair of beautiful fifteenth-century coffers, so little considered among the other Morgan treasures that visitors use them for hat-racks.

To the east, opens the stack-room, if one may apply this term to an apartment so harmoniously splendid. The

book-shelves—carefully double-guarded by iron grilles—do indeed rise in three tiers to the high ceiling. But somehow the architect, the decorator, or the owner has blended this utilitarian feature with the antique crimson hangings, the splendid Flemish tapestry over the fifteenth-century fireplace, the decorated ceiling from the Aldobrandini Palace; it seems part of the general scheme. To the other side of the entrance-hall—called technically the loggia—lies that smaller apartment where the elder Morgan spent so many of his evenings in this environment of his creation. Here the book-shelves rise only as high as a man's head; it has a domestic and intimate touch. And as in the stack-room, every smallest object is particular, individual, priceless. The crystal ewer atop one of the book-shelves—some ancient Greek wrought that. The tall silver cup beside it could proceed from no hand but Cellini's. In the stack-room you may look up from the precious volume which the attendant has unlocked for you, to notice that you have put it down on a fifteenth-century refectory table; and that the chair in whose carved leathers you sit is a Spanish antique. Disposed on the tables of Morgan's own study—exactly like the photographs of the wife and the kiddies on an ordinary business man's desk—stand little Memlings and Holbeins; from the walls Botticellis and Mantegnas smile down upon you. Perhaps least beautiful of all these exquisite furnishings, but most humanly appealing, is a painted wooden bust of a cheerful little girl—"not a pretty child, but interesting." Cocked to one side on her reddish hair lies a flat, black Tudor hat. A high but narrow ruff rises to her chin, concealing her throat, of which a chronicler once said, "So

transparent it seems that when she drinks wine you may see the crimson course." It was to wed the ax, that slender throat. For she is almost certainly Mary Queen of Scots at the age of ten years. From the noble Scottish family which always owned this bust and from which Morgan bought it, the tradition comes straight down to our time. Moreover it resembles the later and authentic portraits; even to the *matte* coloring and a slight, piquant irregularity of the nose.

Not a detail too much, each detail exquisite and perfectly placed. If it were nothing else, the Morgan Library would be a study in arrangement. But it is much else. Behind the iron grille of the stack-room and the study, or the doors of the little vault, lies the largest and most valuable private collection of rare books and manuscripts in all the world. This stands perpetually the monument to that lavish and princely soul. And it is a monument of his own building.

Even at the dawn of his fortune, Morgan began collecting. Unlike many of our millionaires, he needed to waste no time on education. He had background; the nucleus of this library is fifty old and valuable books left him by his father. However, he began with paintings, branched out into ivories, enamels, and tapestries. "He got into ivories early," says the antique trade. No rival, though he had the resources of the United States mint, could now match that collection in the Morgan wing of the Metropolitan Museum. He had cornered the more precious objects before other collectors entered the field in numbers. By now, and even while he lived, he had become a tradition. The antique trade, the museum people of Europe, still tell stories of his



ways and methods. Legendry grew up about him. Once, having bought of a dishonest dealer a stolen picture, he restored it to its owner. That was enough. The verger at Seville Cathedral showed me a fine Murillo in a side-chapel. "That was stolen from us, but your magnanimous millionaire, Mr. Morgan, restored it to us without cost," he said. I made a note of this story for future use. But when vergers at Burgos and Bruges, Chartres and Milan, spun me the same yarn, I tore up my notes.

At about the turn of the century, Morgan began to specialize on books and manuscripts—no one knows exactly why. Virtually everything in this library he acquired during the last fifteen years of his life. He bought with his accustomed taste, shrewdness, and instinct for authenticity. Even at that period collectors felt that prices had gone insane. Perhaps Morgan knew better. Every year Christie is selling for \$20,000 or \$25,000 some first edition whose replica Morgan bought in 1900 or 1902 for \$1,000 or \$1,500. All who had rare books and manuscripts for sale came to Morgan. He did his bargaining personally; unquestionably he enjoyed it. Whereof there is an authentic story. A roving bookman had bought a bargain in Dublin. He came straight to Morgan.

"How much?" asked the great man.

"Six hundred dollars," replied the vender.

Morgan ran over the pages and, "How much did you pay for it?" he asked.

"I could say I'd paid four hundred dollars," replied the vender, "and you'd probably believe me. But I didn't. I picked it up on a bookstall for three shillings."



"Sold!" said Morgan.

Even with all the money he spent on this hobby, even with his taste and shrewdness, still remains the miracle: how he, in face of all his other activities, could have amassed such a collection in a short fifteen years. I repeat that it rates as the greatest private collection in the world. To the bookish, its treasure seems infinite. "How are you in Shakespeare?" I asked an attendant. "Oh, not very strong," she replied; "only three first folios and most of the quartos. Nothing unique or special." I mentioned then the specimens of Gutenberg printing, of which there is one whole bookcase, including two or three complete Bibles. "Yes," she said indifferently, "but the Gutenberg Bible is a kind of best-seller among old books. However, we're very well stocked with Caxtons; and that first dated book there is really something to talk about!"

Other libraries, including a few great European government collections, excel it in detail. Though the illuminated monkish manuscripts be a king's treasure, they are nothing as compared with the manuscripts of the Vatican Library. In its marvelously complete Bible collection it catalogues a Gospel of the seventh century; but the Vatican has codices running back to the second century. There, of course, the private collector is up against the infinite. The Bodleian Library of Oxford and the British Museum have been acquiring English first editions for centuries; none can hope to dispute their supremacy. However, I doubt if even in this item any private collector has such value. American first editions? There are more perhaps in the Harvard Library. Yet this department of the Morgan Library seems

absolutely complete; it has ignored the husk and kept the kernel. From the first extant edition of the "New England Primer" to the works of the Concord Circle, the bibliophile misses nothing.

And in one respect, the Morgan collection stands alone. None even approaches it in original autographed English manuscripts. It lacks only the Elizabethan dramatists; of these the Bodleian and the British Museum long ago cornered the supply. But it has the first book of Milton's "Paradise Lost" ("Probably written by his secretary," notes the catalogue; Milton was blind); letters of Sir Philip Sidney; the successive recastings of Pope's "Essay on Man"; and after that the deluge! Eight originals of Dickens, including the "Christmas Carol"; on its first page, impatient curlicues deleting a line over which the author has written, "the deadeest piece of ironmongery in the trade." . . . One of those microscopic books, the lines no wider than hairs, with which the Brontë sisters used to divert themselves during the damp, lonely nights in their remote parsonage; and beside it "The Professor"—Charlotte's disguised confession—in her ordinary hand. . . . "A thing of Beauty is a joy forever," in the firm, flourishing penmanship of Keats. . . . A wealth of Scott—eight full novels, fragments of others including "Ivanhoe," together with "The Lady of the Lake" and "Bonny Dundee." His obscure running hand betrays the haste in which he wrote. . . . Stevenson's "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," the chirography precise but a little illegible. . . . The minute script of Kipling, in "Captains Courageous." . . . "Trilby" and "Peter Ibbetson" in Du Maurier's square, painter's hand and his original drawings

with lines as fine as cobweb. . . . Tennyson's brook flowing on forever. . . . "Should Auld Acquaintance be Forgotten" scrawled across a wide page in Burns's careless hand. Not only that immortal ballad, but "Mary Morrison," "The Cottar's Saturday Night," and "Highland Mary." . . . No one has described the Morgan Library fully in print. When the time comes for that, the illuminated manuscripts, the incunabula, the English first editions, the American treasures, the autograph manuscripts, and finally the bindings will each demand a separate volume. This sketchy enumeration ignores certain special features such as the Persian illuminated manuscripts; nothing in the library delights my own eye more than their minute craftsmanship.

I have called it a private library. The adjective is not quite accurate. It lives now in a transitional period, wherein it is passing more and more into the service of those who have the discrimination to use it rightly. When Morgan died and did not by his will leave this collection to the city, critics expressed disappointment. But he and his executors wrought better than critics knew. A rare and precious book stands in a different category from a painting or any other object of art. You put the painting under glass, hang it on a wall, guard it by a rail. But to use or appreciate a book the admirer must have access to it, must turn its pages. Our six million, with its sprinkling of criminals, souvenir-hunters, fools, and rattleheads, cannot be trusted to handle books worth almost their weight in diamonds. Some of the initials in the medieval manuscripts are inset with beaten gold. A sly slash of a knife, and a crook would possess a few dollars, while the world would lose an irreplaceable

thing. The estate therefore formed the Morgan Associates, who hold this treasure in trust for scholarship. With no flourish of trumpets, accredited scholars, craftsmen and artists have used it ever since the founder's death.

Morgan always interested himself more in the game than in wealth for wealth's sake; moreover he had spent like a prince. "Other famous collectors," said one of his old associates, "paid out five dollars in a thousand of income to indulge their hobbies. In some years, Morgan paid out five hundred in a thousand." He left, therefore, a smaller estate in cash, securities, and convertible property than Wall Street expected. The ivories, enamels, Gothic statuary, tapestries, and ceramics—which could be guarded—passed to the Metropolitan Museum. To pay inheritance taxes, to keep the library intact, to provide income for upkeep and additions, the executors, heirs, and trustees broke up the collection of paintings. A thousand "old masters" went on the block. This gave the library its endowment. Belle da Costa Greene, its permanent librarian, continued buying on the system and principles she had learned from Morgan; year by year the collection has grown and improved in quality. In 1926 virtually the whole income went for just four items: the original manuscript of Balzac's "Eugénie Grandet" and three superb illuminated manuscripts from the medieval monastery of Weingarten. Of these, the oldest and most valuable has an interesting history. English monks made it—probably at Winchester—in the tenth or eleventh century; it is a curious, charming primitive. When William conquered England, Judith, sister of the deposed Harold, carried this book with her to the Con-

tinent. By gift or purchase, Weingarten acquired it; Judith's book inspired a whole school of monkish craftsmen. Their art came to its full flower two centuries later; and the other manuscripts of the 1926 purchase belong to this era. Especially notable are the covers—plates of silver and gold inset with gems, from which tiny, exquisite statues stand out as from the entablature of an altar.

Finally, the endowment and the generosity of the younger Morgan accounts for that gash where once stood the Morgan mansion. As it stands, there is no provision for working quarters. One could indeed take the antique furniture out of the stack-room, replace it with reading-tables. But any one who knows the Morgan Library in its perfection would consider this desecration. On the denuded site next door will rise an addition with room and accommodation for scholars, artists, craftsmen, and investigators; bringing this superb collection to its full and final usefulness.



## *Chapter XXV*

### THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM

RICHARD HUNT, a pioneer in that group of sterling modern architects which has transformed our city, designed the new Metropolitan Museum. When death stayed his hand, his son, R. Howland Hunt, carried on; later, McKim, Mead & White added the wings. Such a galaxy of architects could have produced nothing less than a noble building. Not so ornate as the Public Library and a little more toned by time, its exterior has the same dignified yet welcoming quality. But its triumph, both of architecture and arrangement, is that great central hall which bursts upon you as you pass the turnstiles and which dispels the illusion that the classic style is necessarily cold. The stairway leading to the picture-galleries first hits the eye. Wide and high and generous, it yet mounts upward lightly. From its lower steps, Borglum's spirited "Mares of Diomedes" stampede down upon you; and, above, Rodin's "Bronze Age" stirs and wakes. The upper galleries at south and north, as though advertising the feast for the eye beyond, flash antique tapestries and golden-toned Chinese paintings. The pillars at ground-floor level open to the right on glimpses of dull-toned Egyptian decoration—walls and sarcophagus-lids wrought forty centuries ago. The corresponding opening on the other side



reveals classical statuary ripe with the stains of long burial in ruins; and from the beautiful Roman atrium at the end of the southern wing comes a distant plashing of fountains. Hunt and his successors have avoided a mistake all too common among museum builders; while making the background beautiful they have resisted the temptation to make it obtrusive. It is not a jewel but a setting.

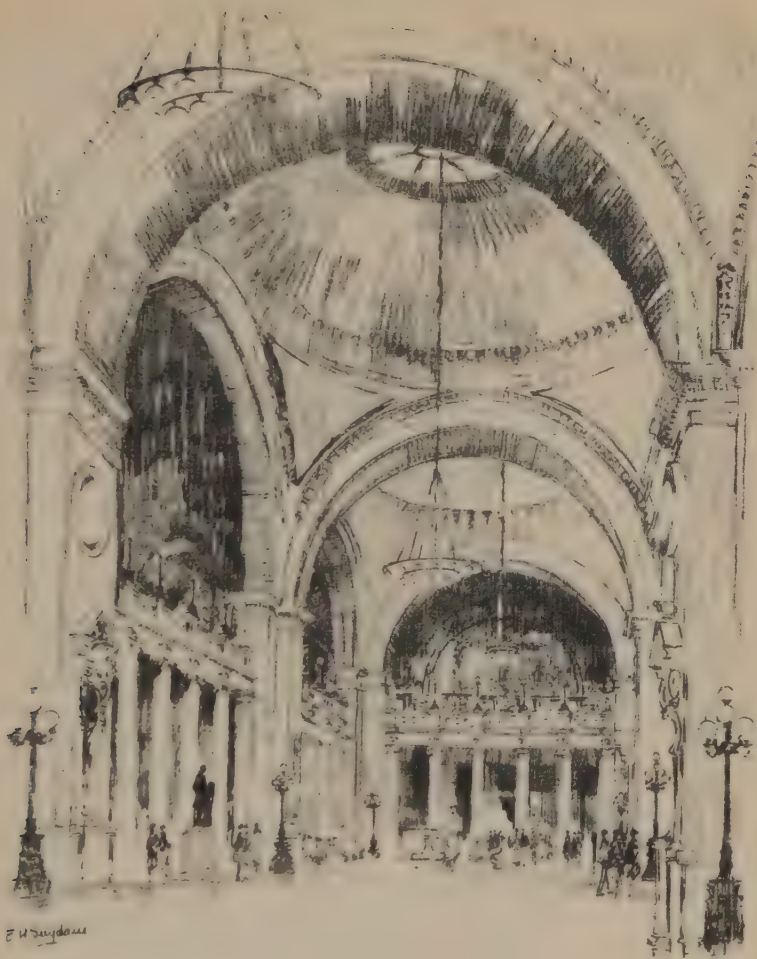
Beyond the doors and the staircase lies a marvelously rich, varied, and complete collection of beauties and antiquities. To call this the first museum of America were perhaps to state an axiom. After all, New York is the biggest of our cities, tripling any other in population and surplus wealth. It should have, if not the finest museum, at least the richest. Compare it with the best of Europe, and you come nearer establishing real values. The picture collection first; this is the department of any general museum which most interests the public. In the item of old masters, the Metropolitan cannot of course stand up with the more famous public collections of Southern and Western Europe. Before Columbus sailed, Florence, with the work of her native artists, was laying the foundations of the Pitti and Uffizi. Before a white man dwelt on the Atlantic coast, Charles and Philip of Spain had lured Titian to their court, had developed Velázquez, were spending in princely fashion among the Italian and Flemish masters who preferred to stay at home; and that collection has descended almost unbroken to the Prado. Before we were fairly across the Alleghenies, Napoleon had robbed Spain, Italy, and the Netherlands for the Louvre. American millionaires scarcely established the habit of collecting before the Civil War; and the Metropolitan did

not even exist until the seventies. For two or three decades after that, it subsisted on benevolence; chance bequests of the rich which often mixed a little gold with much slag. Not until this century could it do extensive buying on its own account. By this time the fields were gleaned to the last ear, and the nations which held the great treasures had, in sheer terror of the Yankee millionaire, passed laws against expatriating their old masters.

Yet the luck and devoted intelligence of many rich citizens have performed miracles, even against this handicap. As the collection of old masters stands, its great quality is its completeness. It lacks those three supreme masters of painting, da Vinci, Michelangelo, and Giotto; but where in the world could Henry Ford himself—even though he had the inclination—obtain a da Vinci, a Michelangelo, or a Giotto nowadays? In some items it has struck exceptional good fortune. It displays twenty Rembrandts, loaned or owned permanently; and none inferior. Probably a Vermeer would bring a higher price in the market to-day than the work of any other man who ever painted; only thirty-eight canvases of this perfect and tender master remain to us; of which the Metropolitan owns three, in his best mature manner. Not even the famous “Girl with the Letter” in the Amsterdam Museum much excels his “Young Woman with a Water Jug” in the Metropolitan. There are ten examples of the joyous and lusty Frans Hals. In fact, the Metropolitan, in common with some great American private collections, is strong in the Dutch and Flemish masters. Amsterdam herself could stage no better show than the loan exhibition here at the time of the Hudson-Fulton celebration.

The old Spanish kings nearly cornered Velázquez; their heirs have guarded the treasure. Yet the Metropolitan has three of his canvases. Raphael, because of the rage for his work in mid-Victorian days, is about as inaccessible to the American buyer as Giotto. But Morgan gave the Metropolitan his "Virgin and Child Enthroned," a first-class example. When the world of art developed its sudden enthusiasm for Italian primitives, the Metropolitan swung promptly into action; it has richness in the early Pisan and Sienese schools. But I may linger no longer on old masters. During these fifty years the museum has changed directors many times and has stood dependent upon the whims of millionaire donors. Nevertheless circumstances have forced upon it a consistent policy—education. Here lies before you in supreme excellence the story of painting, from the Sienese primitive with eyes like a child's marble, down to the easy, sophisticated work of the Georgian British group and the primmer style of our own eighteenth-century masters.

With art contemporary to its own period of life, the museum has played in spotted luck. It might have acquired more Whistlers while the going was good, seeing that he was contemporary and thoroughly appreciated in his lifetime; yet the seven canvases in permanent possession rank near the top of his performance. The directors have done better with Sargent; and, still, the Boston Museum and Mrs. Jack Gardner's neighboring "palace" excel it in specimens of his most famous manner—his portraits. Winslow Homer, it would seem, caught their attention in his own time. To digress for a moment; it is my observation that Homer's "Gulf Stream" attracts more visitors than any



MAIN HALL, METROPOLITAN MUSEUM



other painting in the gallery. The populace likes it for the joyous coloring and the story—that negro lolling on the derelict sucking a sugar-cane, as much part of the primeval order as the sharks nibbling at his toes. And the critical, making gestures before it with their thumbs, are admiring Homer's treatment of the water, which seems to weigh a million tons.

So also, the museum authorities appreciated Inness in time. On the other hand, George Bellows painted for fifteen or twenty years in New York; and of him, before he died in 1925, they acquired only one early landscape. Perhaps Bellows was entirely too modern; for the Metropolitan closes its official eyes to new tendencies upsprung in the past two decades. Among the boys and girls now flouting conventionalities are some who may be old masters two centuries hence; and doubtless fifty years from now the Metropolitan will pay through the nose for its conservatism. But perhaps this is merely carping. Just returned from its galleries, my eye full of Fra Angelico, Vermeer, Ruysdael, Stuart, Gainsborough, Titian, Goya—ye nine muses, what a painter!—I feel, as I write this mild criticism, a trifle ungrateful.

But there is much more than painting in our museum; some of it supreme. Years ago the Metropolitan had the luck to acquire the Cesnola collection of Greek and Roman antiques; and this formed the foundation for its classic collection. The Cypriote antiquities, only one item in Cesnola's gift, are still unsurpassed in the world; he who would know antique Cyprus must come to New York. It includes also the most famous single object in the Metropolitan,



that Etruscan war-chariot with the loves and struggles of the gods wrought primitively and beautifully into its dashboard—or whatever one calls the piece which protected the legs of the driving warrior; I wonder if the word survives from antiquity? This is not only as fine an object as the mysterious Etruscans left behind when they disappeared; it is also the only complete antique chariot in existence.

Now, the classical Greek and Roman collection has an attractive housing. On the ground floor of the new southern wing, the museum has built in replica the atrium or courtyard of a Roman villa studied from Pompeii. It is complete even to the garden—illuminated as in a greenhouse by a skylight above—the plashing marble fountain which cools the apartment even on the hottest midsummer days, and the decoration in blunt Roman coloring on pillars and walls. About this lie small and intimate rooms displaying statuary, vases, utensils, jewels, mural paintings, ornaments, from antique Greece, Rome, and Crete. As collectors view things, this display has varying merits. Cesnola and his successors “got into glass early”; when they began to collect, Italy and the Ægean shores were too busy saving their heritage of sculpture and architecture to waste much energy on humble objects of daily use. To hope to rival Rome, Florence, London, and Paris in Greek statuary of the golden age is to wish for the moon. Early in the historically conscious nineteenth century, the European governments cornered what little material time and barbarian hammers had left to our modern age. The Metropolitan, like every other museum started since 1850, must content itself at best with Roman copies of the great Greek originals. In arranging and filling

out this department, the directors have remained mindful of the educational purpose. Replicas of existing models, ranged—truthfully labeled—among the genuine, spell out the story of Grecian sculpture from its imitative beginnings to its Athenian flowering and its Roman decadence. One cannot leave this wing without a word of admiration for the Grecian decorated urns and vases and the so-called Tanagra figurines. Here again is a corner where the crowds love to linger. Those tall, graceful, aristocratic ladies in their enveloping draperies, those chubby children, have for the modern an appeal much more intimate than that of any coldly beautiful Venus! In them, dead Bœotia speaks across the centuries the common tongue of humanity.

On the other side of the great hall lies Egypt. Fortune and conscious direction have conspired to make this department strong and complete. The Metropolitan acquired the Earl of Carnarvon's collection; he who died while excavating Tut-ankh-Amen's tomb. It has sent its own expeditions to Thebes and Memphis. The double-starred feature is the Tomb of Pernab, transported bodily with all its intricate murals and picture inscriptions. But again the public, avid for the human touch, crowds about the jewels, necklaces, toilet implements and pretty vanities of the Princess Sat-Hathor-Innut and especially the fascinating wooden figures from the tomb of Prince Mehenkwetre. Represented in hundreds of figures about as big as an average doll, groups of the prince's retainers are slaughtering and cutting meat, storing grain, brewing beer, baking his bread, rowing their master down the Nile on his official visits or his fowling excursions; all the busy and pleasant life that was old

Egypt. Also, the expedition found near the prince's sepulcher the mummy of Wah, his retainer. For some reason unknown, his mourners buried with Wah a complete equipment of fine linen bed-sheets. There they lie now above the painted mummy-case, not a single thread of the warp and woof frayed or broken. I have seen women, in appreciation of these fabrics, patting the glass which guards them.

Further along this same floor, a stately hall caparisoned with banners houses the Riggs collection of arms and armor. Weak in early equipment of the chain-mail period, it gathers strength as it goes down the centuries. In specimens of the golden age, when cunning artisans embroidered breastplate and corselet with tracteries of gold, it does not yield much ground to any European collection. On any Sunday afternoon gaping crowds—this time of men—surround the cases of swords and rapiers. I suppose that, like the masculine audience at a prize-fight, they are interested only in a manifestation of force and the fighting instinct, and but dimly aware that they are seeing Beauty. For a fine rapier of the period when Toledo ruled the world's armories is perhaps the most graceful object ever formed by the hand of artisan. Beyond lies a collection of musical instruments; whereof for mere ignorance I shall say nothing, except that it seems representative.

The north wing of the second floor stands monument to J. Pierpont Morgan the elder. I have told in a previous chapter how his estate found it necessary to dispose of something in order to pay death dues. By that necessity the museum lost its expectation of his paintings and the actuality of his unique, unrivaled Oriental ceramics, long a loan

exhibition. Perhaps it was a gainer by the bargain. The paintings, for the most part, remain in New York. Families die out or grow poor; but museums as stably founded as this endure through the centuries. Eventually great paintings go, as drawn by a magnet, to the public. And with the wealth of material in the world, such a collection of Oriental ceramics might again be assembled. But the Byzantine and medieval French ivories and enamel, the Gothic sculptures, the tapestries—these stand unique, irreplaceable. France, while preserving the glory of her Gothic churches, long remained indifferent to the embellishment of carving and statuary with which her medieval craftsmen and sculptors bedecked them. Morgan purchased the unique Hoentschel collection and then, with his foresight and sure taste, jumped into the opening. He skimmed the cream from the market. Though we combined all the private collections in the world, experts say, we should not attain to the quality of his carved ivories—visions in bone. When it comes to enumerating the tapestries, Rider's guide breaks out into a shower of double stars. There is no more tender and engaging object in this museum than the little wooden "Virgin and Child" exhibited under the "Seven Tapestries of the Sacrament." Jewels and silverwork; porcelain; Venetian glass; altar vessels and ornaments; palace furniture and furnishings; hangings from the grand halls of kings—all the glory of medieval and Renaissance craftsmanship is here in its highest attainment.

Beyond lies the latest addition, the American wing. For a quarter of a century the Metropolitan collected—rather conservatively—specimens of American colonial furniture,

which it exhibited in the basement. Now it has the De Forest wing, in which, following a European precedent, it has established the complete paneling and furnishings from old American houses in various periods. As for the furniture, the Metropolitan has not quite achieved the richness of certain public and private collections in New England. For all our Duncan Phyffe, the Yankee cabinet-makers led their craft. The Metropolitan is strongest in mahogany and walnut of the classical Chippendale-Hepplewhite-Sheraton period; weakest in primitives of the Pilgrim century. Of these, I know better private collections in New York alone. However, the appreciation of American primitives is only two decades old; the market remains fluid. Small collections will concentrate into large, and some of these must in time pass by purchase or bequest into possession of the museum.

In this running summary, shamefully brief to describe an institution so important, I have ignored many things: as the modern sculpture with its enrichments from the hand of Rodin; the miniatures; three collections of Gothic art and craftsmanship which taken together almost equal Morgan's; Oriental painting, sculpture, and ceramics; Japanese armor; early American portraiture. Perforce I have brushed only the high spots.

And it stands at sunrise of a new and great era. Frank A. Munsey died in December, 1925, leaving virtually all his fortune to the Metropolitan "for general uses." This sum becomes available some five or six years after his death; in say, 1931. "Not less than twenty millions," said his executors when the will was probated, "and not more than forty millions!"



In 1880 the trustees persuaded the city to give them ground in Central Park, and moved to an ugly temporary structure on the present site. Except for one dirty, smoky line of elevated steam-trains, the city had in those days no rapid transit. It depended mainly on crawling horse-cars. The Fifth Avenue stages, with their proud horses, ran past the museum site. It seemed therefore as accessible as most points away from the elevated. Electric tramways have come in since, and more elevated lines and finally subways. The mansions of the rich crept northward until the most pretentious faced the museum site. "The rich they ride in chaises." Subway and electric tramway avoided their neighborhood. The only direct approach by public conveyance is still the East Side stage. One who travels to the museum by rapid transit must walk nearly half a mile from the Eighty-sixth Street Station of the East Side subway. This circumstance, while perhaps limiting its usefulness, has intensified its charm. What with the forested hills behind, the wide driveways and avenue before, the pleasant gray mansions beyond, the sparse, slow-moving parade of pedestrians, the building seems to radiate calm and leisure. Its visitors have come, you feel, to use it; have devoted time and energy to their little pilgrimage of beauty.

Ten blocks down "millionaire's row," and filling the frontage between Seventieth and Seventy-first Street, stands a mansion so low and wide, so chaste of decoration and with a terraced garden so inviting, that the top passengers on the stages all crane their heads as they pass. Its northern front on Seventy-first Street is an unpierced wall, behind which lies a great art collection. This, until he died in 1921, was



the home of Henry C. Frick. Here dwells his widow; but the property, on her death, will pass to the city. In all the days of his prosperity, Frick collected paintings. He was secretive about this as about everything else. Even the experts were surprised, when his estate announced an inventory, at the quality of his collection. Its hundred or so canvases are not only from the hands of masters; in every case they represent the master at his best. They include a Velázquez, nine Van Dycks, four Rembrandts, three Vermeers, four Gainsboroughs, three Whistlers, three El Grecos, three Goyas. Some day this treasure will be open to the public as freely as that of the neighboring Metropolitan. In relation to the larger museum it will stand as the Wallace collection in London to the National Gallery.

## *Chapter XXVI*

### ST. JOHN THE DIVINE

ALWAYS the picturesque ridge of Morningside Heights—so abrupt on its eastern edge that I might call it a hogback—has dominated northern Manhattan. Even in the time of our fathers, its summit looked westward across the surging, golden Hudson to the serried pipes of the Palisades and eastward across forests, meadows, and brooks to the blue Sound. If Peter Minuit had foreseen that this island would some day become all a city and laid out in imagination its ideal plan, he must have picked this ridge for some crowning piece of architecture, like a town hall. But through two centuries, only a few impractical and unheeded dreamers envisaged a city running solidly from Weeper's Hook to the Spitting Devil. The industrious and able citizenry, busy with immediate tasks, spared no time for such mooning. . . .

In fact the Episcopal Church, richest and most numerous of the Protestant denominations in New York, itself perceived somewhat tardily that here stood the God-given site for its cathedral. As early as the seventies of the last century, Bishop Horatio Potter found that Trinity, hitherto mother-church to his denomination, was doomed as a parish; already the residence district was moving jerkily but

persistently up-town. He dreamed of a great cathedral lying somewhere far to the north. In his administration, the enterprise advanced to the point of a competition for designs. The winning plan must have perished; at least they have no drawings of it at the cathedral. But an alternate, which the populace and the church-wardens liked much better than the winner, is still preserved as a historical curiosity. It portrays a kind of grandiose Coney Island structure, sprinkled all over with towers like candle-snuffers. Fortunately the church lacked the money to begin on this manifestation of the Era of Bad Taste. When a decade or two later the enterprise gathered renewed force, New York was thrusting still further northward. And the trustees had an inspiration. For the comparatively small sum—as values go to-day—of \$850,000, they bought the eleven acres on the southeastern eaves of Morningside Heights; this region, they foresaw by now, would soon become the bedroom of the completed and filled Manhattan. On St. John's day, 1892, Henry Codman Potter, like a medieval bishop of northern France, laid down his crozier, took up the spade, and broke ground. Heims & La Farge had won the competition for plans. It was to be Romanesque, "with Byzantine influence."

The trustees anticipated that the cathedral would cost at least ten million dollars, of which, with the land bought, they had in hand only a modicum. The increased cost of labor and materials has since raised this estimate to twenty millions. As for the time of completion—they, like the builders of the great medieval fanes, left that to the leisure of God. They would erect it piece by piece, as the com-

munity spared the funds and energy. Permanence, quixotically sound building, should be the first consideration. The builders excavated for foundations, not without much unforeseen difficulty. The hard, primeval rock which floors Manhattan Island has made possible our heavy sky-scraper construction. Morningside Heights, with its outcroppings and little cliffs, seems to the eye as solid as the rest. It is not. In courses under the surface the rock has disintegrated; it has little more stability than shifting sand. Near the temporary southern wall of the crossing, you are standing over a solid wedge of concrete running seventy-five feet to bed-rock. Herein invention gave us moderns the advantage over the Middle Ages. They dug with men and horses; they could break down rock-barriers only by the tedious labor of the shovel, pick, and chisel. We have steam, electricity, explosives. Archæologists noticed long ago that the naves of medieval cathedrals were seldom at exact right angles with the transept or the high altar. "Symbolism," said the poets among them. "A cathedral is cruciform. This irregularity expressed the contorted position of Christ's body as it hung on the cross." Builders have a more prosaic explanation. "Those old fellows, with the tools they had, could not possibly make a sound foundation. In the course of centuries the underpinning has shifted, throwing the nave out of true."

But at last the architects got their foothold and walled in the crypt, which is to a cathedral as a cellar to a house. For years, a great roof like that of some strange, submerged factory was the only manifestation of St. John the Divine. Then upsprang one giant arch for the opening of

the great crossing and support of the dome. Though progress and apartment-houses had impinged on the skirts of Morningside Park, though the builders were blasting away the Harlem cliffs to the north, this massive circlet of somber Maine granite seemed to dominate the landscape. Now there rose four of these arches with their supporting buttresses; and now these were roughly walled in and domed. The completed crossing stood square and primitive and massive, blurred against the sky like a Mormon temple. Then came the external complexities of the apse. Presently that was tinted, when the sun struck, with the kaleidoscope of stained glass; and Borglum's heroic-sized angel was trumpeting to the east. It towered now above the district of flat-houses at the soundward foot of Morningside Heights, sample and promise of the completed cathedral. Glimpsed casually from a street vista to the north of the Park, it opens Heaven. . . .

By 1911, the crossing—a great church in itself—was done except for its interior finish and trimmings; the apse shrouding the high altar, and the choir before it, had even something of their formal decoration and color; the Seven Chapels of Tongues, which rim choir and altar as the thorns crowned the head of the Crucified, were taking form and finish. Then Heims died. La Farge carried on. There came a change of plans, a controversy; and when the trustees set themselves to erect the nave, Cram & Ferguson had taken over. Cram is the disciple of the Gothic; and that mystic, appealing form of church architecture has come again strongly into fashion.

Cram decided to recast in Gothic form. It had perhaps

its advantage, this quirk of history. Building a medieval cathedral sometimes took two centuries, as that of St. John the Divine will take two generations. Even in those leisurely old times, fashions changed. Working spasmodically, as the diocese gathered funds and energy, the architect of one century would look upon the style of his predecessors and find it archaic. He would alter it, or adapt it into his plans. As a result, the famous and beautiful old cathedrals surviving from the Age of Faith never look—as do some ambitious modern churches—as though a mechanic had struck them out from a die. Their very irregularities, their deviation from a set plan, endow them with a human quality.

Perforce Cram must either tear down or build to La Farge's structure and proportions. He adapted himself of course to circumstances, and in the process worked out a variation of the Gothic style. His last and greatest problem lay in the external finish of that existing crossing. Consistently with his plan, La Farge intended to carry it upward in a massive tower of the same dimensions; as it shows in his original drawings, a noble and beautiful conception. Cram, however, did not find this tower harmonious with his design for the interior. What he wanted was a Gothic dome—to carry the crossing upward, but also to "step it down" like a modern sky-scraper. This was an operation without precedent; and all the more difficult in that this crossing is the largest ever attempted since Michelangelo built St. Peter's. He invented finally an ingenious interlocking arrangement of arch on arch to support a tower narrowing gracefully from a hundred-and-twenty foot base to a sixty-foot tip. When the verger elucidates this



device with help of a plaster cast, I feel that I understand. But I shrink from trying to describe it on paper.

However, as the unfinished exterior stands now it still expresses the work and thought of its original designers. From a little green side door, one steps into the gigantic, square dimness of the closed-in crossing. It seems on first sight a church so ample, vast, and majestic that the imagination finds difficulty in picturing it as a mere detail in the finished cathedral. But remember the crossing is only that space where nave and transept, bisecting each other, form a rectangle. Lapsing into statistics, this temporary church seats fifteen hundred people. When on special occasions a great congregation overflows into the choir and ambulatories, it accommodates three thousand. But the completed St. John's will seat more than ten thousand and accommodate, on the same terms, fifteen thousand. It will be for size the third cathedral of the world. Michelangelo's gigantesque conception of St. Peter's bulks far above all others; and Seville is slightly larger than St. John's. However, Seville has a curious interior; the structures about the high altar and the choir make it appear like a church erected above a chapel. The eye cannot sweep its whole length. But from the doors at the front portal to the high altar, St. John's will stretch uninterrupted, a distance of more than a city block. Of course, bigness is not beauty, but bigness with beauty is very great beauty indeed. And it is a necessary element in the awesome effect of a cathedral.

Above you as you stand now in the crossing rise the unfinished dark-gray walls, somberly lighted by temporary windows with a smoky tone. When these massive courses

of Maine granite—the bony structure of the cathedral—take their final finish of light Indiana limestone, they will gain in grace and lose in majesty. Sheer above lies a temporary interior dome; whereof a story not embodied in the formal cathedral archives. At the turn of the century there worked in New York a Spanish super-builder named Guastavino. As a boy in Andalusia, he had studied and admired the Moorish domes. Tradition said that the Moors built them without “centering” or scaffolding. Later he had wander-years through Western Europe, and the Roman domes attracted his interest. He realized as he studied them that in this the Moors were heirs to the Romans; they had learned their architecture from the colonies of Northern Africa. The Romans knew not the arch, and they too built domes without scaffolding. Guastavino studied the trick. The adhesiveness of flat Roman tile and brick and the honesty of Roman cement—these, he determined, were the main principles. Also the lower courses were thick and strong, and the upper courses tapered to egg-shell thinness. Guastavino brought his discovery to New York. When La Farge was building the stations for the pioneer East Side subway, he found that the City Hall Station, running as it does round a loop, presented a special problem. He sent for this clever and resourceful Spaniard. At marvelously small expense Guastavino constructed it on his “scaffoldless dome” principle.

When La Farge had completed and walled the crossing, the bishop wanted St. John’s roofed over—and as cheaply as possible—to make it available for services. La Farge designed a plain, temporary dome. That involved scaffold-

ing. He consulted William Barclay Parsons, engineer of the subway. Parsons made his cheapest estimate. It ran far beyond La Farge's allowance for the purpose. "Then, too, your dome must come down some day," suggested Parsons. "And you can't leave up the scaffolding all that time. Erecting it again will cost a pretty penny." La Farge remembered then the City Hall Station and sent for Guastavino. The Spaniard turned in a design and an astonishingly low bid. La Farge took the plans to Parsons. "Fantastic!" said the engineer; "why it's as thin as paper on top!" "Well, study them at your leisure," replied La Farge. Three days later Parsons, with a set of blue-prints under his arm, burst into the architect's office. "Damn the Spaniard, he's right; he's more than right!" he exclaimed. So Guastavino did one of his workmanlike jobs; building soundly, he built beautifully. It must go in time to make place for Cram's great dome and "lantern" which will line the central tower. And even now it is almost invisible. The ceilings about it are unfinished; fragments might possibly drop on the congregation. So the builders have stretched below it a steel net. That gives one of the great accidental effects which mark this cathedral in skeleton. Its shadowy dimness conceals and yet reveals; it seems to symbolize Faith which sees through a glass darkly, and, for that, all the more wonderfully.

But eastward lies La Farge's conception—complete, majestic, awesome. The eye catches first the seven giant pillars encircling the white altar. Of a dark yet luminous gray—one would call the material some unusual marble. It is, in fact, just Maine granite, polished like a diamond. These pillars were cut, originally, as monoliths. The prob-





CATHEDRAL OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE

lem of their transportation in that form had been solved, when the workmen encountered an unforeseen obstacle. It was impossible to polish them without breaking them. So the contractors cut them in two. But the joints do not show; the effect is of monoliths. From their white Corinthian capitals spring round arches of colored stone. Through the peak of the furthest arch gleams the red, blue, and gold of a stained glass window, portraying Christ Reigning in Glory; and the morning sunlight makes each piece of glass in this mosaic shine like a faceted jewel. In another place, the effect might be garish. Here, it is not so much a window as a vent into heaven; it crowns the altar with glory.

Such was the fine and impressive conception of the original architect. It will stand for I know not how many decades, until the cathedral builders take up the final task of harmonizing it with the rest of the Gothic interior. The pillars will then remain; but pointed arches will supplant the round, and the ceiling will rise to Gothic vaulting.

As in all great Anglican churches, the choir lies between the sanctuary and the congregation. Here the transition from Romanesque to Gothic is already afoot. The choir-stalls have for their inspiration those in the Henry VII Chapel of Westminster Abbey. The great opening of the apse has received its fluting of Gothic pillars. The beautiful pavement running between the choir-stalls to the altar, a detail in La Farge's original design, will remain; as will his Byzantine arches above the stalls.

As for the seven chapels, their spreading course rimmed by the mystic dimness of the ambulatories, they face no revision or alteration; except for a detail here and there, they



stand complete. I shall not enumerate their ornaments and decorations. St. John's is carrying on the cathedral spirit, a great ensemble harmonized from a wealth of details. Here iron blossoms into exquisite grilles, glass into celestial color, stone into a multitude of human and heavenly forms and figures. Those statues from the most inspired chisels of America—if there be so many in this completed fragment, how many thousands will bedeck the finished St. John's? The sculptors have taken, as did their medieval forerunners, a little artistic liberty. From one pillar shines down the consecrated face of a saint; on the next, sings an enraptured choir-boy. Into the decoration of the baptistery, Angell has set eight noble figures. Seven are saints or heroes of the church; the eighth is truculent Piet Stuyvesant of the wooden leg, tearing up the English call to surrender. Along the choir-rail stretch twenty small figures in high relief, the preëminent spiritual leaders during the church's twenty centuries. It begins with St. Paul; it ends with Shakspeare, Washington, and Lincoln. There is space for another, empty until history pronounces its verdict on our own century. Nor may I catalogue in detail the items which illuminate and embody the historical sequence of the church, such as that pillar below the credence-table from the Abbey of Bury St. Edmunds where the barons swore the oath of Magna Charta, that tile before the altar which Justinian set above the reputed tomb of St. John, and the Barberini tapestries. But I must stop to mention Malvina Hoffman's noble group of the fallen crusader and the mourning woman—most touching of all our war memorials.

Among the chapels, my own choice falls to that of St.

Ambrose. Perhaps I am tricked by contrast; in the midst of this Gothic, it is an Italian detail. Softly colored marbles finish the walls; the light filters through amber windows; the reredos above the alabaster altar shines in dull gold; it radiates a subdued glory. They tell me that a woman visitor, recognizing its Italian spirit, said to the attendant: "Only Italy could do this! When *will* America ever accomplish such work? Where was it done?" "At Twenty-second Street and Second Avenue, madame," replied the attendant. Carrère & Hastings are the architects.

But expert opinion leans toward that subdivision which was finished last of all, the Baptistery. Some critics call it the finest piece of Gothic detail in America. The groining above is a triumph not only artistically but architecturally. Unlike most chapel groining, it not only adorns but carries weight. At the crossings of its lines blossom medallions, giving the true Gothic effect of exuberance. Where the walls meet the ceiling, run in bright, primitive colors the arms of the Apostles and of four other major saints; and between them Angell's eight fine statues which I have mentioned before.

In 1925, as every New Yorker knows, the cathedral "drove" for funds to complete the nave. The next spring, a bizarre network of steel and timber stretched a half-block westward from the crossing. Then it was laced with the light-gray tracery of Gothic pillars, which by 1927 were putting on their crown of arches. In this stage of construction I climbed to the roof with Mr. Youngs who for eighteen years and under three administrations of architects has served as builder. He boasts that nothing goes into this

cathedral which will not stand the test of a thousand years. The very water-pipes to carry off melting snow are of specially alloyed bronze; and, lest this material cheat calculation, he has set the pipes into waterproof cement.

On a crazy wooden platform, expert Scotch stone-masons were setting into place—by hand—a stone of an arch. They worked, doubtless, exactly like their French and Rhinelander forerunners of seven or eight centuries ago. When Beauvais Cathedral was building, all inhabitants of the town would occasionally drop their regular jobs for a few days and drag building-stones up the scaffolding. These modern cathedral builders have no need of that service; steam and electricity hoist the material. Otherwise, it would appear, the craft has not changed its methods. As Mr. Youngs talked incomprehensible shop with this foreman or that workman, the word “interlock” was ever on their tongues. And I began to appreciate the builder’s attitude toward such a job as this. Not only artistically but mechanically, a cathedral is a great harmony. Every smallest stone contributes to the “interlock”; if the design be sound, it fights not against every other piece but with every other piece. Its weight is not a strain but a buttress.

## *Chapter XXVII*

### THE CITADEL OF LEARNING

THE cathedral appropriated that one divinely appointed spot at the eaves of Morningside Heights; but the ridge-pole belongs to our biggest university. Unless my eye be untrue, splendid, temple-like Columbia Library occupies the exact southerly apex. Until 1897 an insane asylum stood among native trees on this airy and impressive site. In 1897 the trustees of old King's College, building toward a greater university, saw its possibilities, acquired it, and moved up town. By this act they reunited Columbia—physically if not spiritually—with the parent stem. At the birth of King's College in 1757 the established church and higher education were identical. Trinity, then cathedral of New York, lent recitation-rooms to the budding university; Trinity brooded its infancy. The Revolution disestablished the church, and the name "King's College" became offensive in the nostrils of patriots. The trustees renamed it "Columbia." So church and college separated. But now, after a century and a half, the brusque upheaval of John Jay Hall rises diagonally across Amsterdam Avenue from the northwestern corner of the cathedral grounds, and some day Columbia will lie at sunrise in shadow of the three blossoming towers.

Properly and fittingly this citadel of Manhattan, its high air sweet with breath of the Hudson, is passing out of private hands, is becoming one stretch of public institutions. It lies most attractively between two parapets. The one to the eastward incloses Morningside Drive and dams the soil of this narrow, abrupt hill from precipitation into the gardened slopes of Morningside Park. At intersection of the cross streets, stone benches or groups of statuary like the Carl Schurz monument finish the parapets of the gray wall. From these outposts of the Heights the eye sweeps rusty roof-tops bordered by that silver thread which is the Sound. On the western side a similar parapet bounds luxurious, sun-bathed Riverside Drive and guards another park which drops down to the lordly Hudson—its banks here unmarred by wharves and warehouses. Cornerwise between these parapets runs for fifteen blocks the new Cathedral-Columbia group. It ends to the northwest with Grant's Tomb—that exaggerated ink-well.

First the cathedral, of which I have written before; then St. Luke's Hospital; then, adjoining it to the northwest, the newest university quadrangle. The general scheme for Columbia was designed in the last decade of the nineteenth century. Sensibly the architects resisted temptation to build in the Gothic manner. Already imitations of Magdalen College, Oxford, sprinkled these United States. Beautiful, appropriate, it was growing nevertheless a trifle monotonous. They realized too that New York was going to be a sky-scraper city; that even on University Heights, then surrounded by squatters' huts and goat pastures, expansion must proceed not horizontally but vertically. Also



an efficient university, like a business building, needs wide areas of windows. They chose therefore that Italian Renaissance style which prevailed among the sky-scrapers of the period. Had Columbia waited a few years longer, the university might have gained in beauty. At the turn of the century architects had not yet dreamed of the newer and more comely forms into which they would eventually coax our city towers; and most of the Columbia buildings—red brick with gray stone trimmings—are, though harmonious, merely inoffensive and utilitarianly adequate.

To see Columbia at its most attractive, ascend from the Broadway subway at 116th Street—the station of the students—and walk eastward through its pleasant main gate. This is a university gate only by courtesy; for 116th Street is a busy and frequented highway. A few steps behind you runs upper Broadway, with its groceries, its delicatessen stores, its specialty shops, its drug stores, its monotonous piling up of windowed apartment-houses, its busy, bourgeois crowd. But here before you stretches academic atmosphere—as saturated with the flavor of beautiful youth a-learning as any vista of detached, isolated Princeton or Amherst or Stanford. A quadrangle comprising two blocks incloses an athletic field. On any autumn or spring afternoon, crowds of townsmen with a front border of small boys stand watching and criticizing the play on the tennis-courts just beyond the screen, the cavortings of the football or baseball candidates in the green mid-field, the striding of runners on the track. Above doorways lively with hatless boys and girls, rise to left the main dormitories, including that pride of the university and miracle of academic effi-



ciency, the new John Jay Hall. Finishing the quadrangle to the south—on 114th Street—runs a row of what seem rather imposing private mansions. For the most part these are fraternity houses. Any denizen of Manhattan knows that there are fraternities at Columbia because of the grotesque activities of bedizened and temporarily insane young men which mark the season when the dove is cooing for its mate and the Greek letter society angling for candidates. And to the right, facing the grocery stores of upper Broadway, lies the most southerly group of recitation halls.

Across 116th Street, a long, wide flight of steps rises majestically to the generous, imposing Columbia Library, fittingly the central building of the university group; its classical pillars and portico in strong contrast to the other buildings and yet harmonious with them. About it, spaced by lawns and gardens and iron benches, stand the most important buildings such as Earl Hall, irregular but comely in shape, and the very fine Byzantine St. Paul's Chapel. Behind it a queer rudimentary structure which seems to lie mostly underground, shoots upward a pair of smoke-stacks. This is the University power-plant and gymnasium. When the trustees get the funds, it will go higher. At this point the land falls away abruptly. One descends a staircase clinging to a boundary wall which keeps the soil of upper Manhattan from falling into a pleasant little area of grassy park. There, by kindly privilege, mothers and nurse-girls from the surrounding apartment-houses give airing to their babies. Its Amsterdam Avenue corner is finished with a fountain where horned Silenus peers whimsically into the waters. About this figure curves a wide, high bench whose



RUSSELL HALL, COLUMBIA



back totally conceals its occupants from pedestrians. A senior informs me that this is a most wonderful and appropriate refuge "when you and your girl begin to feel sentimental during a dance!"

Teachers' College, annexed to that model experimental school the Horace Mann, fills the whole block across 120th Street; it is of red brick and in the Gothic style. Its tower seems to me especially successful. Then—following a corner-wise course across this city of learning—comes Barnard College, the undergraduate women's department of the university. Twenty-five years ago, I remember, this was a new departure much criticized and chaffed and despised, so that the very limit of academic misbehavior in a Columbia undergraduate was to be seen with a Barnard girl. A similar taboo, I believe, once divided Harvard and Radcliffe. These artificial barriers have melted long since. Adolescent conventionalities stand no chance against the Life Force. Appropriately, the Barnard recitation-halls and dormitories are of light and pleasant architecture. Its athletic field seems just a wide and cheerful garden. As though making a final gesture of resistance against the spirit of the times, this has veiled itself with a high fence so that the passing populace cannot behold the young ladies at play.

Northward Barnard blends into the Gothic buildings of Union Theological Seminary. Allen & Collins, the architects, have succeeded with their adaptation of Magdalen College. The stairway and parapet rising at the southern end of this inclosed quadrangle has a quality almost too light and romantic for a theological seminary! Beyond that lies a limited district which does not know where it is going

and serves during the time of hesitation as the site for public tennis-courts; and then—the final horror of the Civil War—Grant's Tomb.

This area, stretching leaf-shape from the cathedral to the Tomb, is not as yet solidified into one unadulterated city of Light and Learning. Interspersed between the closes and quadrangles lie apartment-houses, some old-fashioned and dilapidated, some beautiful mitigations of that uncompromising type. Even these are bone and blood of the university; for they house students, research workers drawn to Columbia from every quarter of the globe, professors or functionaries of Columbia and its affiliated colleges, unacademic townsmen of the kind that like the academic atmosphere. There are, too, other interesting interlopers like the new Notre Dame Church which looks eastward across the parapet of Morningside Drive—Romanesque in design, and a little gem. On the same row, an eastern outpost of Columbia, stands the tall new women's dormitory, perhaps the most pleasant building of the Columbia group. This, of course, is not an interloper. Neither is St. Luke's Hospital, whose baroque structures fill a block just to the north of the cathedral. All these institutions are expanding; and I suspect that before we celebrate the two hundredth anniversary of our liberties, the church and the university between them will hold unmixed and undisputed tenancy of the Heights.

Indeed this has already become a city within a city, and not a small one at that. In endowment, Columbia yields to Harvard; but it leads all other American universities in attendance. As I write, it enrolls in all departments thirty thousand students. Add professors, instructors, tradesmen,

and servitors—together with their families—and this City of Learning may number fifty or sixty thousand souls.

And it has an academic atmosphere all its own. As though by accident of a seed borne on an Atlantic gale, Columbia resembles not Oxford or Cambridge, pattern for most of our older universities, but the great Continental schools like Paris or Berlin or Bologna. Its very failures in athletics emphasize this peculiar flavor. Even in those outworn days when most undergraduates strove to emulate the "bulldog-and-pipe young man," Columbia, spite of wild wails from the old grads, refused to make sport the be-all and end-all of collegiate life. It did have a spurt of football glory in the epoch of Weeks and Morley; but that perhaps was merely accidental and incidental. Not long after that glorious day, President Nicholas Murray Butler withdrew it for some years from intercollegiate football competition. Since it resumed athletic relations, its teams have gone on cheerfully playing the game and frankly accepting second rating. With the inviting waters of the Hudson at its very gates, it has naturally shown itself stronger in rowing than in any other sport. But one feels that even here the Columbia undergraduate does not take defeat with tragic seriousness. On the other hand, a professor with an arithmetical bent has of late compiled statistics on the amount of student reading in our Eastern university libraries. He finds Columbia so far ahead of all the rest that he has not for very courtesy published his results!

It was not always thus. Columbia was a pioneer in intercollegiate baseball, football, and rowing. Fifty years ago a rival with which Yale, Harvard, and Princeton had



consistently to reckon, it boasted above all an aristocratic tradition. In his "Immigrant to Inventor," Michael Pupin tells how he, a raw Serbian boy, was preparing to work his way through an American university. Columbia lay close at hand, but Columbia seemed unattainable for a poor man. He would feel ill at ease in an atmosphere so fashionable and aristocratic. Only insistence and pressure from that young Rutherford whom he had been tutoring saved this genius to New York. But in the last decade of the nineteenth century, the student body began with bewildering speed to change its character. Forty years of intensive immigration was bearing fruit. The second generation of the alien people had risen to a level where it could educate its sons. City College offered free tuition; and within a few years nearly ninety per cent of the enrolment in this very useful institution was to announce "foreign parentage." But the more prosperous, able to afford the best, sent their sons to Columbia. In a decade, the character and spirit of the university changed utterly. While in cold fact American-born stock always prevailed, it seemed to the superficial and supercilious exotic and foreign. That matter adjusted itself. The sons of the wealthy new-comers began spreading out to the other universities of the eastern coast. At this moment—to take only one race—Columbia has nineteen per cent of Jewish students, while Harvard has twenty-seven per cent. But the foreign influx did, I think, profoundly affect its uses and its atmosphere. When the rush was stayed, Columbia had taken on its faintly Continental cast. It gathers its American attendance from every State in the Union—Pennsylvania has almost as large a representation as New York

—and from small towns as well as great. Yet the typical student has in his ways and his outlook a touch of cosmopolitan sophistication, and at least affects more interest in the things of the spirit than the things of the flesh. When you come upon him unawares, holding hot discussion with a group of his fellows, he is discussing most probably not the chances of the team but the merits of the latest futurist author, the plot of a current Broadway drama, Einstein, or a fine point in Freud. And the extension courses, now an integral part of university policy, have intensified this atmosphere. Columbia extension work is not mere trifling. From all quarters of the city and from all kinds of society come men and women who, in the scant leisure snatched from busy metropolitan lives, are instructing themselves in something which satisfies a material need or an intellectual curiosity. One married woman of my acquaintance, in the odd intervals of her career as mother and wife to a successful man, has qualified at Columbia as a sound and learned archæologist.

By a natural attraction these tendencies have drawn students from abroad. No important nation of the world and no important race but is represented now among those boys and girls passing with the alert, confident step of youth through the pathways and corridors. One who frequents University Heights ceases very soon to stare at the foreign, exotic faces. Variety becomes too common. It has always its collection of rare birds. That Chinese boy who is now doing for the Chinese language what Luther did for the German, got his degree and began his work at Columbia. The son of the hereditary priest of Zoroaster in Persia

came here to finish in Oriental and religious history—preparatory to assuming the high-priesthood when his father shall die. I talked once to the International Club. The audience represented nineteen nations and races! Indeed, but for barriers raised by the faculty, foreign students would swamp Columbia, so high stands its reputation abroad. In 1926 the dean refused regretfully and with thanks the corporate application of thirty-five noble Persian youths who wished to round out their wisdom of the Orient with the learning of the Occident.

I wonder, as I review my acquaintance among the Columbia faculty, whether the character and attitude of the university have not reacted upon them. Probably no body of teachers in the United States has higher academic standing, and probably none better deserves it. This generation of college professors bears little external resemblance to the last. The modern don is not an academic dry-as-dust, trailing his whiskers over musty books, but a man of the world. And at Columbia the transformation came early. The typical professor seems, even more than his brothers of Yale or Harvard or Princeton or Pennsylvania, a citizen as well as a scholar. They have become essential parts in our civic machinery. Their influence and usefulness, indeed, stretch far beyond New York. Not one of the new nations which has grown up since the Treaty of Versailles has missed the services of some Columbia expert. When last I visited the League of Nations, the first acquaintance I met was Professor Seligman, whom Geneva had summoned to solve the problem of double taxation.

If my own boy stood in danger of becoming a snob, I

should ship him off to Wisconsin or California. If his tendency were loutish, I should enter him at Princeton. But if he showed symptoms of narrowness or provincialism, I should without hesitation choose Columbia. More than any other university in America—I think I can say more than any other in the world—it represents the larger outlook.



BLEECKER STREET

well as any its customs, its appearance, and its foreign flavor. For another, it represents all parts and provinces of the old country. The "Yankees of Italy" from Piedmont, Friuli, Lombardy, and Venezia came first, to dwell below the borders of Washington Square. Appropriately southward settled the immigrants of the next wave—Neapolitans, Calabrians, and Sicilians. As this element grew in numbers, it pushed out into the northern region and grouped itself at the elbow of crooked Bleecker Street round that picturesque pillared church of Our Lady of Pompeii—which the wrecker inherited in 1927. Finally, this pioneer colony dwells not, like Up-town Little Italy, in uniform tenement-houses. It inherits, from the days before the Mexican War, a district of fine old mansions with leaded transoms, iron-pillared doorways, dormer-windows; only in spots do the iron-laced façades of tenement-houses intrude into this early-Victorian comfort and decorated regularity. The streets do not follow the exact mathematical pattern of the up-town city. Lanes or country roads in the beginning, they were never laid out; they just grew. Their irregularities, their broken vistas, their tantalizing openings into half-hidden courtyards, chime with the individual and romantic Latin spirit. Faintly they recall the jumble of Piedmontese hill-towns.

On the ground level, the Italian has infused it all with his vivid, pagan sense of life. Even Chinatown must yield in the matter of color. Stop with me before a prosaic butcher shop in Sullivan Street. It has dressed out its windows not with joints and roasts and plates of chops, but with long Italian sausages in glazed-paper wrappings of pink, mauve,



magenta, and yellow. Bright ocher muslin and Prussian blue seals encase even the American hams. The wall behind the block is a blaze of glory and varnish: saints' pictures; chromos representing the royal family in full regalia, Benito Mussolini and the march on Rome; American lithographs cut from the most brilliant advertising calendars. Somewhat splashed with beef-blood, there pirouette, at each end of the meat-chopper shelf, gay little statuettes of Italian peasants bearing vases. These, Michaela, the lady butcher, keeps filled with evergreens in winter, fresh flowers in summer. Herself, she dresses always in a black which matches her velvet eyes and the shadows in her satin skin. The blaze of color sets her off. Does she know this, I wonder?

Next door stands a shop for dairy products. Here is a more subdued coloring, but a riot of strange forms. Do not ask me for the names of the Italian cheeses which festoon its show-window. Though I enjoy them, I always forget. Cream cheeses, molded to the form of plump, shiny bladders about as big as a cantaloupe, dangle in strings like popcorn on a Christmas tree. Sturdier and bigger cheeses, russet gold in color and ovoid in shape, hang from cradles of plaited straw withes; big square cheeses, the rind sheared off on the street side, present a brown surface mottled with streaks of green and yellow. Next is a grocery, its windows packed to the last inch with products in gay wrappers. Here are bottles whose labels make dingy the rainbow. It looks like the inspiring display of an old-fashioned family liquor store, until your fascinated eyes inspect it closely and find—sham. Certain of the liqueurs and tonics, it is true, bear the legend, "thirty-nine per cent alcohol"; but there is also a

line stamped in red, "for medical use only." This makes everything all right. The gay, straw-slung, red-tufted Chianti bottles, conjuring memories of old convivial dinners in San Francisco or the country inns of Tuscany, contain only vinegar. The vermouth bottles, with their gay arms of Italy, flash the disappointing warning, "one tenth of one per cent alcohol." The other window is banked with olive-oil tins; lettered in Spanish, Italian, or near-English, they blaze in a dozen glossy tints.

Beyond is a paste-shop; the window filled with little boxes of ravioli, spaghetti, macaroni, noodles. The shapes vary from long strings like ticker-tape to delicate little shell-forms; the colors from a violet drab to a pale yellow. The very bakeries catch the eye: rolls shaped like doughnuts and hanging in festoons; loaves three feet long with a braided design; tinted macaroons and cakes that are chromos of colored frosting; little bridal couples in sugar to decorate wedding cakes.

Everywhere in the tenement districts flourish photographers' shops. Their radiant and self-conscious bridal couples, their awed little maidens in white first-communion robes, are the special amusement of my own rambles in New York. But Little Italy always went the other quarters one better in size of prints, grandeur of frame, and drama of pose. Of late they have started a new fad. Taking a photograph of some popular bridal couple, the artist enlarges it almost to life-size, cuts out the outlines of the figures, arrays the pictured bride in a real veil and a shower-bouquet of artificial flowers, and sets it in his window for the central display. Linked as closely as the photograph shops with the

great events of marriage and first communion are the florists; their *pièces de résistance*, however, are not real flowers but artificial wreaths for the dressing of graves. This is the only tenement quarter where flowers appear extensively on the push-carts. When in spring and early summer the sidewalks of Sullivan Street display only new fruit and fresh blossoms, windows and sidewalks seem to hold a carnival battle of color.

Niched between the shops or buried in the basements lie the restaurants and cafés. They satisfy the native yearning for color by murals—varying from merely meritorious to definitely crude—of the Venetian canals, sunset over Florence, Vesuvius in eruption; by splashing lithographs of the *bersaglieri* in action, the capture of Gorizia, the royal family enthroned. Here all evening the young men play that American game, pool; while the substantial elder element sits about marble-topped tables debating in energetic Latin fashion over cards or dominoes. Except for pool-tables and prohibition it all much resembles the sociable, entertaining café life of Italy. And prohibition may sit lightly on some of these establishments. Even the federal authorities, trying to dry up a sea of alcohol with a broom, pay small attention to people who derive from the land of the vine and who do not number drunkenness among their sins.

Little Italy dwells as much on the streets as the Jewish East Side. But the crowds move faster, more nervously; there is more animation in all human expressions and gestures. Also—except at morning and evening, when the tenements disgorge or swallow up the workers—one misses young women on the streets. Night after night I have

ranged this quarter drinking in its vivid gaiety. Young men knot in the doorways, talking, laughing, gesturing; matrons in black shawls gossip back and forth from stoop to stoop; children in hordes whoop and frolic underfoot. But whereas the East Side, of spring and summer nights, resounds with the crystal laughter of women accepting attentions, in Little Italy the girl of marriageable age is tucked somewhere inside. If she ventures abroad, she moves under escort or chaperonage. From the Levant to the east, Italy-at-home has acquired a touch of the harem attitude; from France to the west, the conception of the glass-incased *jeune fille*. . . . After the stunning Caporetto disaster I attended at Rome a conference on the burning question of maintaining civilian morale. An American woman with much experience in the war had her say: "You should institute some drives for war charities like the British and French. You know—pretty girls on the streets selling flowers or collecting money. It not only helps the charities, but it keeps the war before the people." Fifteen seconds of shocked silence; then the minister of propaganda, his face working, spoke with the steely accent of a man who is trying to control himself: "If Italy is to be saved, we can save her by some other means than displaying our young women on the streets!" And that was that. . . . The first generation brings to America this harem attitude. The native-born learn in the American public schools our frankly natural relation of the sexes. Odds on, by the time the Italian girl grows to years of self-support she is flapping as frankly as any daughter of Plymouth Rock. The parents storm and shake their heads; but what can any race do with a young girl in this independent genera-

tion? However, even when Rosina or Lucia has taken her hurdle into American ways, she remains chary of appearance on the streets. Public decencies must be preserved!

On the other hand, some of the more conservative families maintain their social customs even into the second generation. A teacher in a public school asked little Adriana to take a notice of a parents' meeting to her father, and call it to his immediate attention. "I can put it beside his plate," faltered Adriana, "but I must not speak to his table!" Puzzled, the teacher asked the visiting district nurse how Adriana lived, that she might not address her own father. "Oh, that's easy!" replied the nurse. "This is one of those patriarchal families. Her father and mother—Adriana's—are the nucleus. And that lets them out. The boss is Adriana's grandfather. They all live together—Adriana's parents, their parents, and goodness knows how many collateral relatives—on a whole floor of a tenement. There's a common dining-room. The various women take turns of a week cooking and waiting on table, as assigned to duty by grandfather. He decides the smallest details of their life. There's one long table for the men and another for the women and children. The men may talk, and do—unless the patriarch has something to say. Then they listen in respectful silence. But from the moment when milord sits down until he rises, the women and children must not even giggle!" No flapping in this family!

These are the conservatives, so set in their ways that one wonders what upheaval of the spirit was ever strong enough to hurl them into a new world. Perhaps the majority of the inhabitants in this Italian colony are in one



way or another conservatives; which explains why they stick to their piece of Manhattan. At any rate, they do not propose to move again; even though they have prospered, have piled up savings, turned savings into investments, could rate in the old country as landed aristocracy.

In extending Sixth Avenue, the city tore a broad strip from the heart of Little Italy. The dispossessed inhabitants merely shifted a few blocks westward into Greenwich Village, driving the native Irish-Americans before them. While the other Italian colonies seem but a temporary abiding-place in the upward march of these immigrants, this slice of the city has settled down behind the fire-escapes of the old Victorian doorways with an air of permanence. Now that immigration has shrunk to a few thousands a year, one sees no longer the bright touch of old-country dress. Otherwise it is Italian of the Italians, and seems determined so to remain.

Gay and vivacious in its workaday aspect, Little Italy rises on public occasions to the exalted heights of rapture. Even the public funeral of some important citizen has its touch of festivity; there is such a wealth of flowers, such bravery of banners and regalia! As for weddings—if the weather be warm and fair, the happy couple rides in an open taxicab from church to café, with the bride's robes and veil tossing like foam over the lowered top. A trailing vehicle spills over with floral tributes; behind it the rest of the party, clad like the morning, break into song; and every spectator on the sidewalks smiles and waves as though this were all in his own family. If the bride's people be affluent, the party will dance until dawn at beautiful old Mori's or



at one of the hundred less pretentious restaurants; music, in floating tenor voices, will sweeten all the night.

In midsummer, when none other of our polyglot peoples would think of disporting themselves out of doors, Little Italy rises to its diapason of gaiety. All our Italian colonies celebrate on July 16 the feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. And not only each district, but often each street, has its patron saint; chosen, I suspect, with some preference for natal days that come in midsummer. Elizabeth Street, where Sicily prevails, holds the most colorful of these celebrations, that in honor of St. Rosalia. But they are all beautifully alike. Across two or three blocks, shut off by favor of the police, hang strings and festoons of soft altar-lights in ruby glass vessels. American flags, arms of the province, of the papacy and of militant Italy and streamers in red, white, blue, and green, drape all the fire-escapes. The shrine of the saint in the church becomes a flower-bed. Before it burn six-foot candles, decorated along all their length with floral designs and holy symbols—offerings of gratitude for material favors and spiritual blessings. Out on the street stands before some specially honored door another and greater shrine whereon bank after bank of flowers and lights mount upward to the image. All evening long, regaliaed societies come with flowers and banners to visit it—young girls in virginal white, men whose dark coats are mere background for red, purple, or green sashes and stoles; matrons in severe black relieved only by flowers. On the outskirts of the jam, Italy dances, bargains at an impromptu village fair, perspires, laughs, gesticulates. From violins, guitars, and accordions street musicians give back smooth Italian

melodies to honey-sweet Italian tenor voices at the windows. When Little Italy plays, she plays intensely.

Also—and this perhaps our critics of the Italian miss—she works intensely. I have seen the peasants on the Calabrian hillsides, after plowing and harrowing to a fineness of which no American farmer dreams, rubbing out the clods between their hands; this symbolizes for me Italian frugality and industry. They are the newest among our new people; the third generation has not yet come to the age of production. And yet the late Dr. Antonio Stella, head man of the Italians in New York, remarked to me once with some pride: "I shall address to-morrow five hundred Italian-American physicians. Some of them are rushing fast to the top of the profession. Every one is the son of Italian immigrants. Few come from the mercantile or professional class. I suppose half of their fathers could not read or write. They represent the longings of illiterate men to give their sons what they themselves could not have!"

To destroy some popular illusions which heated controversy over the immigration law smelted into superstitions, this same Dr. Stella has taken his pen in hand. The southern Italian brought with him in his mad rush to America one undesirable element. Sicily and Naples were still paying the spiritual debt of the comically incompetent "King Bomba." Society, before Garibaldi struck his blow for freedom and United Italy, had begun to degenerate. Lacking honest and fair courts of justice, the inhabitants administered their own law of the stiletto, the agencies being several fraternities of laudable origin such as the Mafia and Camorra. When Victor Emmanuel, Cavour, and Garibaldi

brought the law to southern Italy, these brotherhoods went sour, fermented into blackmail, private revenge, terrorism. The efficient *carabinieri*, knowing their people, set to work to persecute them out of existence. Our door swung wide open; the feudists and terrorists and blackmailers rushed to New York and found good pickings among their countrymen. Now, an Italian is in all his ways picturesque. An Italian gang-stabbing or Mafia murder, a blackmailing case, always makes a smashing story for the newspapers. The offscourings of Naples got themselves advertised. The reputation of Italy-in-America was splashed with the bloody stain of violent crime.

Stella, being a man of science, went to the statistics and studied the census of 1910, covering a period when the Italian gangster was doing his worst. The homicide rate all over this country was 6.83 to 100,000 of the population and that of the immigrant Italian only 1.14. In New York, however, the "general rate" was 4.61; the "Italian rate," 5.25. That seemed the only blot on the escutcheon. The delinquent and criminal rate was for all the other foreign-born 746.6; for the Italians, 527; and so on. When it came to drunkenness and vagrancy, the Italian percentage was merely a trace, as they say in chemical analysis. And since the quota made emigration to America difficult, even the murder rate has shrunk.

Our embarrassment with our Italian population lies not in their sporadic crimes of violence but rather in their slow assimilation; the habit, which persists even to the third generation, of herding apart in colonies. The new régime in Italy, with its craze for nationalism and its claim on the

loyalty of all who carry Italian blood abroad, has by artifice and with deliberation stimulated this tendency. At present the average Italian among us has no fair chance to blend with our native population.

## *Chapter XXIX*

### THE CHANGING EAST SIDE

A QUARTER of a century ago, any proportionate survey of Manhattan gave chapter on chapter to the East Side; for it held then a larger place in the scheme of our city than to-day. There dwelt nearly a million men, women, and children of some twenty foreign races. Poor and frightened and at the threshold of a brave but hard adventure, they had jammed themselves into the flimsy tenements—as swift of growth and as monotonously alike as mushrooms—which rose for their accommodation. They had brought with them strange foreign manners, customs, and costumes; of which, toward the end of the nineteenth century, native New York began to take vivid notice. The district offered picturesque adventure. The “junk collector” poked through its second-hand stores for fabrics from Bohemia, peasant potteries from Hungary, samovars from Russia and Poland, even water-pipes from the Near East. Under the elevated in Allen Street—a district later to become a crying shame of New York—Russian and Jewish brass-workers set up their manufacture of hand-wrought vessels. Promptly the up-towner discovered them. To the faintly Bohemian, Welsh-rabbit-party atmospheres and settings of Amsterdam Ave-

nue flats, East Side brasses became an indispensable. A samovar marked one as a member of the illuminati—as does to-day a piece of American primitive furniture. Various races, notably the Hungarians, imported their native cooking; uprose restaurants of foreign flavor, predecessors to that more sophisticated row which now occupies Lower Second Avenue.

Notable among these was Little Hungary. Roosevelt discovered it when as police commissioner he was playing Harun-al-Rashid. He came back again and again, bringing with him specimens of those diversities which marked his circle of friendship. Presently Little Hungary became comparatively fashionable. But the demi-slumming resident of the upper West Side or the tourist Seeing Life in New York never spoiled its charm. It was a club for the affluent among a dozen races. Of afternoons, they played leisurely games of chess or dominoes; and the atmosphere resembled that of a Continental café. But at dinner-time the famous Hungarian orchestra—all tuned to the xylophone—took command; and the narodni wine poured forth from the bottom of a contraption which seemed a glass-blower's fantasy. Portly, comfortable-looking gentlemen in the uniform Tuxedo of festivity began to fill the tables; over the silver and napery smiled faces of the stern but mobile Slavonic type, the dark, good-humored Magyar, the alluring Italian, the snub-nosed Polish Semitic. With them came jeweled Magyar, Jewish, and Italian matrons and maidens whose dark eyes softened the electric lights. When the orchestra warmed up and the wine began to flow, the company abandoned itself to that innocent



gaiety which the repressed, conscientious, soul-shadowed Anglo-Saxon or Celt finds so impossible in himself and so entertaining in the other races.

I was privileged to see Little Hungary on two of its glorious nights. First, Theodore Roosevelt, having now become president of these United States, visited it in state to honor his old friend, Max Schwartz, the proprietor. Behind the ropes hooked into the stalwart hands of two hundred policemen, the whole East Side milled and cheered. Again there was the less formal but much more entertaining party by which Mr. Schwartz celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of his business. All Who's Who East of the Bowery attended—cloak and suit magnates, aldermen, judges of the Supreme Court and Tammany leaders, together with their tribes of comely women-folks. When I left at five in the morning, Who's Who was still in hot rivalry for the honor of dancing with Mr. Schwartz's prettiest daughter.

I make so much of Little Hungary because it was both typical and famous. Would I had room for a hundred others! However, I must not pass over the Café Boulevard. Hungarians and Germans established it in an old Second Avenue mansion with a famous staircase. By virtue of its fare, its music, its imported wines and beers, this also attracted a distinguished "up-town trade." On evenings of early summer, I have seen Vanderbilts and Stuyvesants dining on its terrace beside Michelowskis and Lezinskis; with Samuel Hopkins Adams, Gelett Burgess, and an all-literary party just inside the French windows. Sprinkled over the quarter were foreign restaurants whose upper

floors stood sacred to balls, to wedding receptions, and to christenings in both Jewish and Christian fashion. Stood, I say; they stand yet. So long as one lives on the East Side, he accepts crowded conditions. He has no parlor-room for extensive entertaining. And your East Sider loves like an Indian to make any social affair a potlatch.

I forget which of these establishments housed the big party when Alderman Louis Zeltner's second daughter married into the cloak and suit business. That night, Louis chartered the establishment from cellar to roof. Dignitaries of journalism and municipal government came down town with their wives and daughters to honor the bride; Judge Marsh of Special Sessions danced with the daughter of Alderman Pilsudski. We all danced, in fact, with gaiety and abandon until ten o'clock. Then the patriarch of the family—he wore his top-hat all night—passed among us distributing black skullcaps to the men; for the wedding march had struck up, the bride was coming, a religious ceremonial was beginning, and the male head must be crowned. The mother of the bride stood with the wedding party holding in arms the eight-months-old sister of the bride. The guest next youngest was a four-year-old brother of the groom. His parents had arrayed him in full evening-dress even to a top-hat; this humorous fancy attracted almost as much tender attention from the women guests as the happy couple themselves. The bride and groom joined at last by the rites of Zion, we packed the restaurant downstairs and ate until four o'clock in the morning. At the head table presided not the bride but the patriarch in his top-hat; aged matrons in the conventional wig flanked him. At one o'clock the waters

of the central fountain irradiated first red, white, and blue and then blue and white. We all stood to sing "The Star-Spangled Banner" and the Zionist National Hymn. And, I repeat, none who derives from those breeds to which English is native speech could possibly have had so good a time.

These are glimpses of the happier and prettier and more successful East Side. Below that lay the millions which have flooded through this vestibule to a new world; when I think of them, I vision some gigantic upheaval of life, like the migration of an ancient steppe tribe or of an oceanic species. There, sixty years ago, lay the lower East Side; geographically an eastward bulge of long Manhattan Island, and humanly a hive of prosperous middle-class or working-class families. Along the seaward streets walled orchard-gardens still bloomed and fruited. It did not, indeed, differ greatly in social composition from Greenwich Village. Why exactly immigration flocked here instead of to the West Side, no one in this age seems to know. Perhaps the deciding factor was proximity to the down-town business district. First came the Germans, to disturb the settled Irish along those pleasant streets which border the Bowery; the Celts scurried northward ahead of the Teutons. The Holy Synod of Russia moved to exterminate the Jews; the ghettos of Warsaw, Cracow, Odessa poured into Manhattan. With them streamed folk from the northeastern littoral of the Mediterranean — Italians, Magyars, Greeks, Dacians, Serbs, Slavs. Sullenly the Germans passed on after the Irish. The Russo-Polish Jews, however, remained the dominant race. To begin with, they had the advantage of numbers. Then they established, early and firmly, their own



F.H. Gouda

CHERRY STREET





special industry of clothing manufacture, which for two or three decades confined itself to the East Side. As the district shook itself into shape, the other races were merely spotted, isolated islands in a Semitic sea. So it remains to-day, when the East Side has gone into its first stage of senile decay.

Start, if you would see it to best advantage, at the city fish-market a little eastward from the point of the island. From there to the Brooklyn Bridge you cut through a tangled bewilderment of races. They begin to untangle as you pass the piers and approaches to the Brooklyn Bridge. First comes a thin Spanish district. Our "Spaniards" of the American continent lie scattered all over the city, with a preference for Chelsea Village. These dwellers under the shadow of the bridge are from the old country—Castile or Andalusia or Catalonia. Fringing them, dwell in some of the poorest tenements a knot of Greeks. Next a street or two of Italians; one is always finding small, detached Italian colonies in unexpected places. And now begin English signs translated into Hebrew character. A block or so more, and it is the ghetto.

Let us view this district as it lived and moved, toiled and bargained, at its heyday. Five, six, and seven story tenements stretched in monotonous rows, the sole, unconscious ornaments those stepped fire-escapes on which the city had insisted as a slight measure of protection from the perils of jury-building. In the morning of any fair day, these crazy skeletons seemed to have broken out, like pasture-land after a rain, with puffballs—feather-beds in process of airing. On Mondays and Tuesdays they displayed the red, white, and



blue of the family wash. Picturesque and paintable, they caught the eye of our artists. As no European exhibition can hold up its head without at least one study of sheep and haystacks, so every New York exhibition must have its pastel or water-color or oil of East Side fire-escapes on wash-day. At the curbs below, solid rows of push-carts displayed small wares, comestibles, clothing. Round them surged the bewigged housewives, bargaining in Yiddish to the verge of physical assault. Everywhere—doorways, sidewalks, gutters, curbs, pavement—raced and whooped children. In summer they dressed sketchily; the very youngest usually wore but one garment. In summer, too, fruit broke out on the push-carts. Fruit is messy, especially the watermelon. The foul odors of garbage-cans parked by the tenement doors, the stale odors of too many people, were streaked with the acrid odors of decaying peels, cores, and rinds. Let me not reproach the East Side with its garbage-cans. The whole island is so congested that we have no space for back alleys. The modern apartment-house solves the problem by ingenious mechanical devices. But many a semi-smart district of family houses like the restored Greenwich Village has its sentinel garbage-pails. I have noticed that inured New Yorkers never made such a fuss about East Side smells as tourists from Denver or Peoria or San José, where there are back alleys. But for all the crowding and the odors, Rivington Street or Essex Street or Pitt Street seemed on a fine evening to radiate cheer, animation, even happiness. The environment was better than that from which these people emigrated. For one thing—the major thing, I suppose—it was sanitary with hope.

As though self-contained and intending to remain so, the lower East Side shook itself into form. The old Bowery, "port of missing men," plexus for the drifters of all the white races, became its cheaper Tenderloin. Its real theatrical district was and is lower Second Avenue. Grand Street was its better shopping district. There, at Passover and Easter, the dignity and prosperity of the East Side staged its own parade, just as colorful as that of Fifth Avenue and much less self-conscious. Tompkins Square to the north, once a highly respectable residence district for native Americans, had by the teens of the present century become a professional center for foreign-born physicians and lawyers who tended the health or adjusted the troubles of their peoples.

In this new world, the Jews were improving Yiddish from a jargon to a flexible literary language—on the one hand Abram Cohan with his fighting "Vorwarts," on the other the Yiddish dramatists. Delancey Street and environs developed a Bohemian Quarter, where in Continental-looking cafés poets pulled verses on the unwary visitor. As the second generation grew up to English speech, this mental energy flowed over into the greater language. Once the native American reader knew his East Side from Myra Kelly's "Little Citizens," brilliant but external. Of late, however, a school of second-generation Americans native to the quarter has put this life into stern and sound realism. The best of the Yiddish actors began to invade the Broadway stage. The Neighborhood Playhouse, performing in English on the native soil, helped show the way to modern American playwrights.

Struggling upward! But under these brighter developments lay sociological perplexity. It had become the most congested district in the world. However, to do the old East Side justice, it never even approached, for misery and destitution, the condition of the slums in London, Paris, or Naples. One devil of mischief absented itself—extreme poverty. In London before the war, “one third of the East End never knew where the next meal was coming from.” But the East Side had its own industries with wealth mounting and wages rising; the new citizen could always find a job. Sanitation was another matter. These humble and ignorant newcomers had dumped themselves down among the most intelligently sanitated people of the world. If left to its devices, the district would become a tuberculosis breeder, a seedling-ground for scrofulous, stunted children. Half the philanthropies of New York worked to solve the problem. The Henry Street Nursing Settlement, the Morgan Maternity Hospital, set themselves to care for mothers both before and after childbirth, to see that every child should be well born. The three major religious bodies—Protestant, Catholic, Hebrew—turned their attention to education in material good living. The pioneer Boys’ Club on Tompkins Square took up instruction in manners and civic morals. The city or private philanthropy ripped out of this ant-hill space for such playgrounds and breathing-places as Jacob Riis Park and Stuyvesant Fish Park. The tuberculosis rate, which rose alarmingly for a time, began steadily to descend; also the infant mortality, and the proportion of undervitalized babies.

However, like woman’s work it was never done. The

immigrant abided but temporarily on the East Side. As soon as he grew prosperous, generally he moved. It was the symbol of success—this trek to a new residence in Williamsburg, New Jersey, or the Bronx. But a million emigrants were coming to America every year, of whom a good proportion flowed into the vacuum. Each day, you must begin all over again.

Then politics and economics wrought transformation. The World War stopped the immigration of those races which had filled the East Side, and the new restriction laws erected a permanent dam; the flood dwindled to a trickle. The clothing business of New York, jumping suddenly into national importance, settled about the southern edge of Times Square. Residence on the East Side, because of lack of rapid transport, became inconvenient for half the clothing workers in New York. The entrance was stopped; the rush through the exits became torrential. Manhattan is losing in population while the greater city grows apace; and the main reason is this exit from the East Side. In the winter of 1927, the Board of Education closed a big school-house on Madison Street as no longer needed. I remember the period when it had a waiting-list.

So to an old frequenter and lover of Little Hungary, the Boulevard, and Essex Market Court—one who has seen the czardacz danced in costume fresh from Hungary, the International sung by twenty thousand militant socialists from the Russian slums, the Anarchist Revolution proclaimed to frantic thousands by Herr Most himself, the stretch of Essex Street milling with frantic mothers in protest against vaccination as a device of the "Crists" to poison

their babies—the East Side has undergone a subtle change. The crowds are smaller and less lively. There are fewer tow-like wigs about the push-carts, and more, many more, fur coats. The touch of old-country dress has become as rare as hen's teeth. And the East Side flapper has grown as smart and self-confident as any of her species. I discussed this change with an experienced nurse at a social settlement. "One thing we never encounter any more," she said, "is malnutrition. We haven't reported an undernourished baby for a year. There's still some violation of the elementary laws of hygiene. But even that is passing."

Whereof the modern East Side affords a beautiful piece of symbolism. When this century was new, philanthropy erected in the worst district a set of model tenements. Each apartment had a bath-tub. The tenants approved these new devices—and used them for coal-boxes. Now, with the shrinkage in population, the worst rookeries are hard put for tenants. So, one by one, the landlords are playing for custom by installing bath-tubs! These undramatic facts, brought together, weld a crown of glory for a company of modern saints—settlement workers, physicians, nuns, teachers—who have for a quarter of a century preferred struggle to' ease, smells and discomforts to self-indulgence; who have fought and won a good fight for that cleanliness which in this case stands almost identical with godliness. Allen Street demands bath-tubs!

As you come out into the numbered streets, the great Redemptorist Church and monastery rises from the monotonous tenements of Third Street. Any aeroplane view of Manhattan shows the East Side lying like a meadow sea-



ward of our great central cordillera. Only one eminence relieves the flatness; the two high towers of this establishment shoot up like Shiprock from the plain of the Navajo Desert. Its position here is significant. You have reached the northern edge of the purely Jewish district. Thence, even up to the seventies and eighties, the East Side is a jumble of races. A polylinguist might identify, in a day's stroll about Tompkins Square, every variation on the old Aryan tongue.

Only, at about Fifty-ninth Street, a prophecy for the East Side intrudes into this mosaic. Here stood along East River a few years ago some fine old suburban houses, fallen into very lowly estate. Just after the war, certain home-seekers, inspired by the example of Greenwich Village, admired this site with its fine sweep of the river to the fore, its breath-taking arc of the Queensboro Bridge above. The houses could be restored. The pioneer, I believe, was a young physician who, after four years of distinguished service at the Great War, decided to try for a New York practice. "Let's buy and restore one of these old houses," he said to Mrs. Doctor. "We'll have a comfortable place to live. And I can do my charity work among the tenements about us. We'll have a little social settlement of our own." Social settlement! Almost the next to see and admire Sutton Place was a certain Mrs. Vanderbilt, who made of her restoration a terraced, gardened mansion. In the twinkling of an eye, the region was grown fashionable. When no more old family houses remained to restore, down went regular tenements and up went sophisticated apartment-houses. Similar restoration had run its course at Turtle Bay Gardens some-



what to the southeast. Now, from the back door of the up-town Wall Street and the fashionable shopping district, the Tudor City is scraping away old bricks and rusted fire-escapes to erect apartments of one, two, four, and six rooms for clerks, cashiers, store managers, head buyers, salesmen.

If the middle East Side can do this, why not the lower East Side? There it lies almost in shadow of the down-town financial district. Many a worker in Wall Street must have beheld these sites so near to his job and sighed as he thought of the easy walk from Rivington or Henry Street as contrasted with his bad half-hour in the subway rush. The foreign-born are going out; some other element must come in to take their place. Conceivably it may be the negro. More likely—and in this view I have support from many real-estate experts—the lower East Side will become the bedroom for the towering southern terminus of Broadway. It needs only a leader, a touch of the pioneer spirit, a little financial courage.





COLUMBUS CIRCLE

## *Chapter XXX*

### WOMEN'S WEAR

STRAIGHT, wide, and uncompromising, Seventh Avenue emerges from the southern border of the Park and pierces the heart of Greenwich Village. There it makes a slight turn to the eastward, becomes Varick Street, and enters the financial district; looking down its broad course from the corner of Greenwich Avenue, the spectator would call the misty needle of the Woolworth Building its seaward terminus. If ever property-owners and commercial associations can rid Seventh Avenue of its temperamental and hesitant surface tramway, it will become an automobile boulevard—the most direct route from Wall Street to that nest of suburban communities in Westchester County.

On its way southward from the Park, Seventh Avenue jumps into the theatrical district, leaps over the glitter of Times Square, and crosses bright and busy Forty-second Street, as through a gigantic oblique gateway, between the Times Building and the new Paramount Building. For some eight or ten blocks south of that, it is a high-walled city cañon as plain and unmitigated as even Manhattan knows. Above, windows in myriads; between them, lettered in gold on the walls, firm-names almost invariably strange and foreign. Although along the first two blocks terraced roofs

with golden trimmings relieve the monotony, the effects which catch the artistic eye are purely accidental manifestations of utilitarianism; as a light-well, rounded at the top, which rises so high and looms so mysteriously in the afternoon shadows that it seems an archway for legions of angels.

The interest of this district lies in the crowds at the foot of these stark eminences. If he wishes to thrill himself with a dramatic contrast, let the raw spectator of Manhattan approach it from the north at noon hour of some pleasant matinée day. Forty-second Street is gay and feminine. The subway entrances flood forth women in gay attire; they are beginning an afternoon of delight at theater or movie by "lunching out." Threading this river of flowers come the army of girls from the Paramount Building; all emulating, so far as their physiques permit, Gloria Swanson or Mary Pickford; and the chorus-girls of Broadway rush to breakfast and the job. Even the masculine background—clerks from the theatrical offices, actors, and the sporting element of Broadway—wears brilliant raiment.

Walk southward two blocks past a row of movie-houses, the doorways already crowded with flappers, past the shadow of the old Metropolitan Opera House—on this side a blank wall—and a great crowd looms before you. Are they waiting for a procession? They pack the sidewalks, squeeze out into the side streets, dispute space with taxicabs on the pavement. Dressed in conventional ready-made clothes, linen shirts, white collars, uniform gray fedora hats, they present, from the neck down, the general appearance of small-town business men. But the faces are all foreign;

not a single lean Yankee countenance with its look of sharp, alert benevolence. The Russian Jew prevails—snub-nosed, high of cheek-bone, ivory of complexion, pathetic of expression. But classical Italian faces regard you with soft Latin eyes; and that group there, debating in sonorous speech, is unquestionably Greek. . . . To make no more mystery of a perfectly obvious matter, these are the garment-workers getting their noonday breath of air; and those windowed walls above house the clothing industry of New York. One of the half-dozen most important manufacturing centers in the Western Hemisphere, it betrays its presence neither by smoking stacks nor clanging machinery. Electric current drives its million needles. Only sometimes of an afternoon keen ears detect over the rattle and roar of traffic on Seventh Avenue a humming which is the voice of a hundred thousand sewing-machines.

For some unfathomed reason, the upper blocks of the garment district keep themselves at noon solely for the men. But push further southward, and the girls of the needle trades surge into this sober current like the overflow from a dye factory into a sluggish river. Why are they in the garment business if not to know the latest styles? Except for the *midinettes* of Paris, no working girls are more chic. Among them you behold the same diversities of racial type as among the men; and sufficiently often they blossom into beauty. Indeed, when the cloak models troop in company to the innumerable restaurants of the ground floors—no put-up luncheon for these superior young persons—you have a parade which matches the *Boulevard des Capucines* on a summer afternoon.



The story behind this concentration of the clothing trade between the Pennsylvania Station and Times Square, this amassing of wealth in real estate, buildings, and plants, is material for an epic of business. In the days when our immigration came mainly from the British Isles and North-western Europe, New York had no clothing industry worth mention. We imported most of our men's suits; and even our poorest women patronized the village dressmaker. Then persecution from the czarist Holy Synod sent a horde of Russian and Polish Jews scurrying to our open door. For some reason never entirely explained, the Jew emerged from the Middle Ages a specialist in clothing. Most of these refugees had plied needles abroad. Also, a little ahead of them, had come German and Austrian tailors. The philosopher of the clothing trades tells me that to these men our industry owes its inception. They had made uniforms for crack cavalry officers, the most particular of all customers. No men better knew their business. As the Russian and Polish influx brought its supply of cheap and trained labor, these Germans and Austrians set up their little factories in the East Side tenements—at first for men's clothing, and later for women's.

There followed the sweat-shop era, deplored by sociologists, loathed by union labor. The tailors organized, took destiny into their own hands. The first of their lively and picturesque strikes was for the sixty-hour week; the last for the forty-four-hour week. Further, they brought wages up to a decent standard. All this several historians of labor have told in print, notably Ray Stannard Baker. Most of them, however, have omitted an important factor. In

the beginning, employers and employees were alike a set of poor immigrants trying to establish themselves in a new world. Then their industry and expertness drove out the foreign product. The business went ahead, accumulated capital, became enormously important. And at last the employers themselves became interested in granting easier conditions.

By now, the New York factories were specializing more and more in women's garments. And women were turning from the country dressmaker to the less bothersome "store-clothes." The simplicity of modern fashions helped in that. The business felt rich enough to move away from the East Side. At the dawn of the century it began to occupy tall, substantial, steel-skeleton buildings about the northeastern fringe of Washington Square. It carried with it from the East Side, however, some lingering rudiments of old sweat-shop traditions. Certain factories were all too careless about the laws for protecting their employees. This had a dreadful result in the famous Triangle Shirtwaist Company fire. It started suddenly; it raged like a volcano. Hundreds of girls were trapped on the top floor. They hung in clusters to the window-ledges; then, as the flames enwrapped them, dropped by scores to the pavement eight stories below. . . . William G. Shepherd, then a correspondent for the United Press, happened to be passing. He saw a woman fall like a sack of grain . . . he shook himself out of his horror, rushed to a telephone across the street, called up the office. As he told the story, he kept interrupting with: "There goes another—and another—my God, here's one jumping now—yes—she's gone . . ."

This tragedy finished even the rudiments of the sweat-shop era. And now the clothing industry, rolling up capital like a snowball, was advancing up University Place. Down went substantial old residences; up rose box-like lofts. Just to east lay the Ladies' Mile of Broadway, still a fashionable shopping district. A man who managed the oldest and most esteemed department-store on that row has told me what happened next. One year, things were going as usual. The carriage trade parked its conveyances in University Place or along the side streets. Next year the carriage folk, shopping in the fashionable hour between twelve and one, found themselves struggling for passage with ten thousand operatives. The window-dresser could not set out a new model, but a crowd of designers, sketch-book and pencil in hand, flattened their noses against the plate glass. The store fled to a Fifth Avenue site above Thirty-fourth Street.

This retreat became a rout. The factories crossed Madison Square, were pushed up Fifth Avenue. At Thirty-fourth Street, the department-stores rallied to stand or die. They formed the Fifth Avenue Association, and, supported by the banks, laid down the law. No more factories on Fifth Avenue! Being the most important body of customers for the women's ready-to-wear, they had had the whip-hand all along. But the industry was still expanding, still rolling up capital; more and more small men on the East Side found themselves becoming big men and poised themselves for the jump northward. At last the merchants, the manufacturers, and the city authorities got together and selected Seventh Avenue between Thirty-fourth Street and Times Square as an undisturbable and perpetual center for the clothing

trades. To the south the Pennsylvania Station and the new post-office formed one boundary; and Times Square, the firm and rooted amusement center, could be depended upon to take care of itself. Also, westward toward the river lay much room for expansion.

When this momentous decision was taken, Seventh Avenue, save for the fine group about the Pennsylvania Station, lay undeveloped—a stretch of three and four story brick residences which had degenerated into outhouses of the elder Tenderloin and were now coming back to shabby respectability. The wrecker tore into them; during the building era after the Great War, twenty-story skeletons became in a few magical weeks the workshops of a thousand operatives. It was a period of epic contrasts. Already the operatives were holding their noontime forums at the street-corners. And with them mingled the broad-shouldered, iron-handed, hard-boiled steel-workers—"cowboys of the air." Once in this era I walked along Seventh Avenue with a British M.P., representing an industrial constituency. He observed the difference between these laborers and the ones who filled his meetings at home. "So well nourished!" he exclaimed; "so well dressed and so fit! It fills me with despair of competing against you—ever!" With Seventh Avenue full, the lofts spilled westward toward the river and eastward toward Broadway. By the law of attraction, the factories of Fifth Avenue below Thirty-fourth Street began shifting over into the Seventh Avenue quarter; perhaps this stretch of the great central thoroughfare may some day regain its old smartness.

I know no parallel situation in any great city of Europe

or interior America—the manufacturing district lying tight against the pleasure-district and a few hundred yards from the fashionable shopping district. And what a massing of industry it is! I stoop to statistics. New York's output in women's wear, men's wear, and furs amounts to something like a billion and a half dollars a year. While dyeing proceeds on the outskirts, while the East Side still houses small factories, while Williamsburg is becoming a self-centered producer of knitted goods, while producers of men's wear lie scattered all over the greater city, Seventh Avenue stands as important in the clothing industry as Wall Street in finance. Viewed with the eye of imagination, it is just as impressive. No one man built it up, no super-industrialist like Ford. It is the accumulation and creation of a thousand expert and enterprising master tailors, refugees from Teutonic militarism, and a hundred thousand ragged creatures who found emigration the simplest way to obey the edict of Protopopov: "One third of the Jews in Russia will die, one third will embrace Christianity, and one third will emigrate." But long ago the business became too big for any one race. Italians have come into it, both as small owners and operatives; Slavs, Spanish-Americans, Greeks.

To view the annexed and scarcely less important fur business, one must travel southward past the Pennsylvania group, now reinforced by the great Equitable Assurance Building. I hope the wayfarer—if he does not know it already—turns aside, enters the Pennsylvania Station, and, at the head of the stairs leading down to the main hall, views that impressive interior. No cathedral has a more awesome aspect of height and majesty; a detail, beautiful and pictur-



esquely apposite, is Jules Guérin's vast mural maps. He should spare a glance, too, for the pleasant façade of the Hotel Pennsylvania across the street, perhaps the most cosmopolitan among New York's enormous inns. At Thirtieth Street you know you are again in an industrial district; but the atmosphere has undergone a subtle change. The nooning crowds are thinner. The hand-trucks, bumping along under filmy loads of ready-mades on hangers, have given place to men who carry on either shoulder bundles of white or brown or tawny pelts that seem to blow like thistle-down.

The Great War found the furriers modestly established southeast of Washington Square. Though already a heavy consumer of finished furs, New York had no special importance as a manufacturing center. Then hard times descended upon Leipzig, hitherto the great clearing-house for European and Asiatic pelts; the czarist armies had cut it off from the Russian, Siberian, and Chinese supply, and His Britannic Majesty's Navy stopped all routes to the westward markets. And New York had depended on Leipzig for its raw pelts. Also, the war increased the local demand. The cloak and suit makers could no longer get French and German trimmings; they must fall back on fur. That distinctively American fashion continues to this day; fifty per cent of the New York fur output goes north of Thirty-fourth Street for trimmings. The New York furriers met the emergency by organizing their own system of collection. They dealt with China direct. Australian furs had gone hitherto to the important London market. But now three submarine zones harassed the route to England, while the Pacific was safe. We lifted the Australian fur trade from



London. As a distributing center, St. Louis took the peacock feather from Leipzig. The war over, we swung into our era of bloated prosperity. Fur trimmings! To our women, possession of a complete fur coat marked the dividing-line between poverty and decent affluence. A shrewd woman of my acquaintance stood last winter before a certain public high school on the edge of the tenement district, watching the girls emerge. Something in their appearance struck her; she drew a pencil from her bag and made a rapid tally. Just a fraction less than sixty per cent were wearing fur coats. And so the fur business prospered furiously. When it was turning over its two hundred million dollars a year, it followed women's wear northward, seized its own three blocks of Seventh Avenue, began to pierce the sky with terraced sky-scrapers; blossomed like the rose. That is perhaps an unfortunate simile; to sensitive nostrils, raw furs do not smell like roses!

## *Chapter XXXI*

### THE MAGIC CARPET

FORMING a famous corner, Broadway meets Seventh Avenue at Forty-second Street and emerges into Longacre Square. I prefer the older name for this enchanted area; though the city authorities, ever respectful to the Press, long ago rechristened it Times Square. It lies walled about by the up-town sky-scrapers, in the shape of an irregular hour-glass. Beginning at the south in a small triangle, it narrows as it passes the Hotel Astor and then flares out into a large triangle. From the northern corners, Seventh Avenue runs straight as a taut string to the Park, and Broadway staggers off in a series of nervous twistings.

Like posts of a cosmic double gateway between the City of Pleasure and the City of Industry, rises at the southern end the old Hotel Knickerbocker of convivial memory, the Times Building, and the Paramount. Visibly and externally, these three landmarks have nothing in common. The Knickerbocker—transformed by prohibition into an office-building—is serene red and gray Renaissance. The Times—the “Northern Flatiron”—pioneer sky-scraper in this district, is crowned with a sheaf of pillars which make it top-heavily attractive. The lofty Paramount, like the institution

which it represents, slaps all classic rules in the face and revels in modernity. In some of its daytime aspects it seems as thin as paper, and the clock at its summit looks like a wedding present on a mantelpiece; then walk a few yards and it becomes massively imposing. It was not made for daylight, however, but for those perpetual holiday nights of Times Square when its upper stories glow with hidden illumination and the light from its electric signs makes a dazzle on the façade. Indeed only a few New Yorkers ever see its finest aspect. Atop the lofty Shelton Hotel in Lexington Avenue stands an observation parlor. By night you look from this stance on an irregular stretch of flat roofs out of which rise towers of light. There is, too, a faint, geometrical banding of luminance from the streets below. Nothing moves; of the men who made and inhabit the substantial fantasy below, no trace or sound. It seems as though the life-blasting tail of a comet had brushed the earth. And the Paramount Tower, dominating this vista, is a thing of lace and ice, lit like radium with emanations of its own substance. . . .

Not only do these three gate-posts of Manhattan's hectic playground fail utterly to harmonize in style, but they do not even stand alined. In that, they give a foretaste of the long acre beyond. Nothing whatever in Times Square matches anything else, which is its charm. Still stand rows of solemn brick or brownstone houses that were residences in more leisurely days, and old hotels like the Cadillac with false pillars all over their fronts. Between them, square and bulky, loom theaters and movie palaces whose only conspicuous adornment is the terraced fire-escapes zig-

zagging down their sides. Square, utilitarian "taxpayers," all windows, fill slices of valuable land between their greater neighbors. Heavy and dark and comely bulks the Hotel Astor. And into the northern end projects a blunt wedge of a building, unadorned except for the riot of gilt lettering on its windows.

Mildly insane by day, the square goes divinely mad by night. For then on every wall, above every cornice, in every nook and cranny, blossom and dance the electric advertising signs. When the theaters still dwelt at Herald Square, Broadway had begun to flash these pictures in light, then without motion or color so that we called this accurately the White Light District, or the Great White Way. Only when Broadway jumped to Times Square did these beacons take on motion and burst into all the colors of the spectrum. Do you remember the lady in an electric rain-storm with her long skirt blowing to show the binding? Do you remember the kitten eternally unrolling a spool of silk thread? Then there was the golfer, making at two-minute intervals a perfectly grooved drive, and the chariot race, with teams of fours galloping all night. . . . Of late years, these moving-picture effects have rather gone out, replaced by changing geometrical designs or by legends ceaselessly unrolling to advertise this car or that cigarette. But they have increased mightily in number, color, audacity, and humor. All other American cities imitate them; but none gets this massed effect of tremendous jazz interpreted in light. Even London is following the craze. But when that very modern young man the Prince of Wales came among us, he visited and revisited Times Square just to look and to admire.

Here the entertainment district of Broadway is at rest. Or comparatively so; if a victim of St. Vitus's dance lies down, you call that rest for want of a better word. At the end of a century, it has halted its northward march from Park Place. Here, probably, it will stay. True, Times Square is still far southward of Manhattan's human or geographical center. Nevertheless it lies almost at the heart of the greater city, in which you must reckon not only Westchester, the Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens, and Staten Island but the big suburbs of the New Jersey shore. Also, it is nucleus to our spider-web of rapid transit; accessible by the whole subway system, by the West Side elevated lines, by the tubes to Long Island and New Jersey. Until Manhattan changes beyond the recognition of our returned ghosts, Times Square will still flash its jeweled invitations.

I say "theatrical district" by courtesy and habit. Ever since MitchelMark saw the signs of the times and revamped the Strand for a moving-picture palace, the cinema houses have been sweeping the theaters off the main thoroughfare. By 1927 they had completed their conquest. As in contempt, they left below Forty-second Street three or four relics of past glories—as the Casino, still beautiful with memory of Lillian Russell, and the Empire, where at the opening of the century strode the romantic drama. Also the Metropolitan Opera House remains as I write, on its old site. A plain but proportionate box of a building without, it has a formal old-gold and crimson stateliness within. But it will pass soon to broad Fifty-seventh Street; and probably the movies will consent to replace its mahogany and silk with gilt and glitter and multicolored lights.

However, the territory below Times Square had little interest for the lords of the silver screen. They wanted the central stretch of Broadway from the Times corner to the turn of the elevated at Fifty-third Street; and they got it. Loew's great theater facing the square from the west advertises vaudeville *and* pictures. That is the only conspicuous exception. When Roxy, Napoleon among exhibitors, decided to build his new theater, he found no place on Broadway; between them, the Strand, the Rialto, the Paramount, and a dozen lesser houses held all the available sites. His great new palace of the screen, resembling a World's Fair building made permanent, stands on Fiftieth Street a little westward from the crooked highway of flashing lights. . . . Broadway is the anomaly of the moving picture business. It manufactures at Hollywood, four days away by the fastest train. But here it "opens." With a film as with a play, the New York run sets the pace for success in the back country. And in the sky-scrapers of this district, the moving-picture business, third among our industries, has its financial center.

So now when we mention a spoken play as a Broadway success, we are trifling with the exact truth; the cinema has shoved the "legitimate" to the side streets. Spread out westward toward Eighth Avenue and eastward toward Sixth, our hundred theaters offer with tangible and audible actors comedy and tragedy, symbolism and melodrama, light opera and musical comedy. They, like the picture-houses, have built largely and permanently, as though assured that Broadway had settled down. Fine structures, most of them; finished often with the ultimate touch of tasteful if aggres-



sive interior decoration. However, the play's the thing; except for the Theater Guild with its daring modern scheme, I find that I do not remember one from another! I am always too much interested in the stage and the audience.

The moving-picture invasion has changed utterly the appearance of Broadway pavements at the crowded, rushing, dazzling theater hour between eight and nine. In those sock-and-buskin days twenty or twenty-five years ago, when the theaters already impinged on Times Square, the very pavements radiated luxurious elegance. Private carriages and "hired hacks," varied by an occasional humpbacked automobile or a daring electric hansom, discharged at the glittering marquees ladies in long evening-cloaks escorted by gentlemen—I can dower them with no baser title—in top-hats and Inverness cape coats. The audience "dressed the house." If you had an orchestra seat and wore just a business suit, the doorkeeper let you pass; but you quailed from the usher's eye. "First nights," especially when Clyde Fitch wrote the play or John Drew, Ethel Barrymore, James K. Hackett or Weber and Fields graced the boards, had the brilliancy of a Fifth Avenue reception. "Society"—a body with hard and definite boundaries—included an element whose fad it was to patronize the theater; they attended the important openings. Our six or eight dramatic critics came as a matter of course and routine; in the lobby between acts Huneker and Winter and Darnton and De Foe stood flicking their tail-coats with their white gloves or resting their crush-hats lightly on their hips while they determined whether the play was in for a run or for the storehouse. Boxes, from which you caught only a segment of the stage,



TIMES SQUARE



hung three-deep down the proscenium pillars. All through Act I, the aftermath of fashionable dinner-parties disturbed the drama by their glittering entrance. A brilliant first night gathered two thirds of Who's Who in New York.

Now Broadway at the theater-hour belongs to the people; to the unnumbered, overwhelming crowds pouring into Times Square from Hudson tube, Long Island tube, West Side tube; and thence, herded by the police, distributing themselves to Roxy's Theater, which holds six thousand people, to the Paramount, the Strand, the Rialto, the Capitol and the Rivoli which seat between eighteen hundred and four thousand, to twenty smaller houses. The typical male spectator—a clerk or a mechanic holiday-making—wears a day suit, well pressed and brushed. The wife, sweetheart, or light-o'-love by his side is always chic—no New York girl above the pinch of poverty fails in that. But evening-clothes? Why? No one dresses for the movies! On they come as the police stop the traffic to let a new batch through; marching with the steadiness and solidity of a regiment. The dancing colors in the electric lights above have blended into a strange saffron tint whose glare plays antic tricks with make-up. And back to the lights those faces fling a glow of excited anticipation. Mankind is going to the magic carpet which carries it into enchanted lands where life is too wonderful for daily living. Humanity is seeking release from the wheel. . . .

Packed to the curb, the slowly advancing crowd bubbles with excited chatter and laughter. And all along the way, tinsel shop-windows glitter under the lights. Except for the theater entrances, the cheap and necessary restaurants which

feed the workers of Times Square and the eternal hose-and-lingerie-and-glove shops, jewelry stores occupy all the ground floors. Some of them show diamonds and platinum wrist-watches; but most dress their windows with frank imitations in glass and synthetic composition. Even the street fakers, struggling for foothold against the gay but irresistible crowd, sell seventy-nine-cent strings of artificial pearls. Girls sidle over to the windows, where they stand arm in arm "boneying" these gauds. Young men in ready-made clothes edge after them, assessing them for the prospect of a "pick-up." At least, that was the old-fashioned term. Has the fearful and wonderful younger generation renamed the old game?

Meantime all the seventeen thousand taxicabs in New York seem to have mobilized like the taxis of the Marne and rushed for Times Square. Here the efficient New York police, who invented traffic control, confess themselves baffled. Juggle the streams as they may—and the game has grown more complex than chess—they cannot forfend that nightly jam in Times Square. The patrons of the regular theaters are the most acute sufferers. In the nature of things, their conveyances cannot drift with the main current but must cut athwart it. The wise theater-goer starts nowadays, if he is going by taxi, as early as 7:30. The custom of the leisurely dinner before a box-party lies in storehouse with the scenery of "Zenda." Indeed, the really modern theater has no boxes. The wisest theater-goers prefer to take their chances in the subway. It is suffocating; but it gets them there on time. And evening-clothes seem inappropriate to strap-hanging and shouts of "Step lively!" Further, the



dominant cloak and suit business just southward gives to our theaters much patronage of visiting buyers. These people, as though compromising with their working conscience, wear evening-clothes on Sunday night only. So our audiences are dingier than in the days when our women-folk loved Hackett and Faversham, and we sentimental young males dreamed soft dreams of Lillian Russell's golden hair or the young Ethel Barrymore's luminous eyes. Full dress merely spots them.

Except on first nights. Then the dinner-coats, the filmy evening-gowns and the jewels come out, and the setting is again brilliant. But the institution has changed beyond recognition. First-nighters there are yet, I believe; though no longer conspicuous figures, veritable municipal institutions, like Diamond Jim Brady and Mrs. Jackson Gouraud. The audience of the vitally important opening performance has become frankly professional. As New York absorbed the publishing business of the country, the critics multiplied like guinea-pigs. Nowadays they spill over into the first balcony; representatives of obscure publications must even content themselves with second-night seats. Certain well known authors, especially dramatic authors, make it a point to attend. Rival managers send representatives to spy out the land; moving-picture producers come to ascertain in advance if this is a good buy. And with them sit their sophisticated, stage-wise women. A few managers have in late years tried to clear the first-night house for regular paying patrons by presenting an invitation dress-rehearsal on the eve of the opening.

Years ago, some one dubbed all this the "death-watch."



To the actors, the curtain rises on a sea of hard and critical eyes. The manager, dealing with first-night hysterics in the dressing-room, can hear in imagination those snatches of stage-weary conversation in the lobbies: "What do you think?". . . "Oh, say, awful!". . . "Well, he didn't get away with it." . . . "Give it three weeks." . . . Then the long wait in a restaurant or a hotel room for the late morning editions which announce probably the beginning of the end. For even if you reckon in a sale to the movies, only one third of the new offerings go through to financial success. The rest endure a week of struggle, a fortnight more of desperate "papering." Then the actors begin to look for other jobs. Finally comes the night when the management thanks them for their loyal efforts, and the scenery passes to that great storehouse in Seventh Avenue which is to Times Square as the traditional skeleton to the ancient Egyptian banquets. Since the movies absorbed the old sure-fire melodrama audiences, the theater has become more than ever a gamble. Managers are experimenting; reaching for some formula which still eludes them.

So by night; but of an afternoon modern Broadway has for me its most entertaining aspect. Every day is *matinée* day with the movies. On Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, when the "legitimate" houses in the back streets consent to entertain, women in bright raiment take the district unto themselves. Not only do the ladies of the audience parade abroad, but the settled inhabitants of the district, outpouring from the big but modest hotels which run solidly along Seventh Avenue and which have supplanted the old theatrical boarding-houses. Chorus-girls and show-girls

from a dozen musical shows, young students in twenty schools of the drama, vaudeville people performing in New York or "resting" between engagements, they have breakfasted while the rest of Manhattan took its luncheon and have gone forth to exercise, to crash the gate of some play which interests them professionally, or to hunt a job. Their short-vamped shoes, their splashing gowns, are of the stage, stagy. Threading the brilliance of a matinée crowd, they seem to paint the lily.

And Broadway wears its business on its sleeve. I know transplanted Middle-Westerners who have spent the leisure hours of their first week among us in walking round Times Square just to read the signs. These announce not only the names of those who govern the theater, the cinema, and the music business of the United States, but many a queer theatrical trade. On the second floor of that plain, blunt-nosed building dividing Broadway from Seventh Avenue at the north, stands established a firm which guarantees to grow hair on bald heads, and shows photographs in the window to prove it. This is not a simple ministration to human vanity, any more than the hundred beauty-parlors displaying wax heads with marcelled bobs from other second-story windows. Looks are part of an actor's capital. When he begins to "wig," the salary shrinks. "Musical instruments repaired," "Violin maker," "Musical employment agency"—these symbolize another important business of modern Broadway. Every theater of the greater city, every moving-picture house, every night club, and every first-class hotel has its orchestra. Also the concert business of the United States, like the theatrical business, keeps its driving-

wheels in and about Times Square. "Tin Pan Alley" passes to print the offerings of the popular song writers. There is a little cake shop in the Forties where aspirants to the throne of Irving Berlin meet to exchange ideas or to match words with music; and across the street a restaurant where by established custom nearly all musicians, from "concert features" down to second violins and trap-drummers, sign their contracts. Costumers, wig-makers, theatrical boot-makers, there are as a matter of course; and little establishments up two flights of dingy stairs which advertise "Costumes repaired." Also, you keep running into the modest signs of more singular theatrical trades. "Gags," one advertises—just that simple declarative and nothing more. The proprietor makes a good thing by collecting the jokes in the comic papers of a dozen languages, translating them with a Yankee twist, and distributing them to vaudeville people at two dollars a week for the batch. Until late years, the sign "Tom Shows" decorated a third-story window in the Forties. Here, of course, was a specialist in "Uncle Tom's Cabin." I have seen a negro leading up its stairs four bloodhounds in leash!

Subtract the visitors and audiences, and this becomes a small city—self-contained, tremendously individual. The inhabitants work hard if intermittently; and they are virtuous. They have scarcely less conventional morality than the folk of Main Street, and they crown their virtues with the greatest of these, Charity. The audience at an out-of-door prize-fight held in New York during the spring of 1927 came mainly from the Broadway district. That day Charles Lindbergh was flying to Paris. When before the main bout

Joe Humphrey, the announcer, asked his audience to stand silent a minute and pray for Lindbergh, they did it as simply, naturally, ungrotesquely as the congregation in a backwoods meeting-house. Indeed the district is well stocked with churches, all having in some way or another a theatrical cast. In Forty-eighth Street stands the Union Chapel, holding prayer-meeting and revival for the evangelically inclined. The board under its electric cross displays the legend: "Leading Broadway artists sing and help out at every evening service . . ." An actor of my acquaintance, meeting and liking a liberal clergyman, accepted an invitation to attend morning services. As they parted, the actor asked reverently but absent-mindedly, "When do you ring up?" . . . In Forty-ninth Street St. Malachy's Actors' Chapel, Roman Catholic, packs its nave during Sunday masses or Lenten missions. In Forty-sixth Street stands St. Mary the Virgin, cathedral of New York for the Anglo-Catholic faith. There, behind a beautiful altar-screen, crimson vestments and banked candles glow through cloudy incense. Just a step apart from the district, John Roach Straton of Calvary Church invokes brimstone on the sinners of Broadway and the lost flock of Darwin. In the early Fifties, the theatrical district blends with a parade of automobile sales-windows; this has its culmination in the tall, new, and modern General Motors Building at the Park corner. And as though bounding the City of Delight to the north stands at Fifty-sixth Street the Congregational Metropolitan Temple, a church buttressed with social institutions. Its building, by Barney & Chapman, is a massive yet towering structure—Gothic adapted to steel, cement,

and terra-cotta. Some moderns, including Konrad Bercovici, call it the most successful piece of church architecture in New York.

A city of delight, this district. That is what the theater is for—to release man from the wheel, to make the stars shine in the daytime. In its purity the compound and crown of all legitimate pleasures, in the impurity of its fringes it decays to strange forms. Since the first mummers unpacked at a country fair, this undesirable following has plagued and troubled the theater. It was so when Shakspeare wrote, rehearsed, and managed his two plays a year on the Bankside, when Molière worked himself to death in the heart of old Paris, when the admirable Garrick revived the soul of London at Drury Lane. Broadway also has its border which practises what a fine old lady of my acquaintance calls “risky pleasures.” This begins to wake and grow active when at eleven o’clock the theaters reopen their entrances and the workaday folk of the audiences, their faces still throwing back a glow of delight to the saffron glare of Times Square, pour like rivers into the subway entrances. It deserves another chapter.



## *Chapter XXXII*

### BROADWAY AFTER MIDNIGHT

THAT border and lining of Broadway which we call the Tenderloin has lived always by contradictions. Frankly, vice was its foundation and its reason for being; yet was it sentimental about virtue. None, not even a mid-Victorian lady, ever drew so meticulously the line between the "good woman" and the "bad woman" as those soft-handed and hard-faced men who rolled its roulette wheels, sold its green goods, and kept its dives. It preyed on the public, but when want or suffering touched its ready sentimentality it flamed with miracles of charity. More often than the police will admit, it gave the sucker an even break. Paradoxical always, it has in the decade since the Great War accomplished its greatest paradox. To state that intelligibly, I must go back into its history.

Broadway works in two shifts. From seven to eleven, it belongs to the luxury restaurants, the theaters, and of late the moving-picture palaces. From eleven until dawn, the Tenderloin claims its hectic hours. In the last period of Broadway Past—when it rested at Herald Square—the theaters behaved with exemplary propriety. Themes were romantic, wheezes pure. The antique Anglo-Saxon "damn"



still drew from an agreeably shocked house a sure-fire laugh. Toward the end of this period, daring managers introduced now and then a "tough girl." The sophisticated knew that she was probably a little more than tough, but she brushed over the consciousness of the innocent. Comic opera, just becoming musical comedy, clipped its skirts at the knees; but it atoned for that offense against Victorian modesty by innumerable filmy underskirts. The theater, in the language of current advertising, was a "high-class family resort." By contrast, the Tenderloin wore its wickedness on its sleeve. Near the point where the West Side elevated shoots out into Herald Square, stood then the famous House of All Nations, the palace of a business which spotted rows of old houses along Seventh Avenue. Much conversation and joking at club bars about establishments of this sort—how archaic such talk would sound now! Just southward was the Haymarket, where vice danced. Vice also walked abroad, painted—rouge was in those days the brand of sin. When the theater crowd had passed, men in flashy clothing buttonholed the loiterers, directing them to infamous resorts. And of course the bars, varying from brass-bound, mirrored palaces to low dives, ran wide open. Almost as openly flourished the gambling-houses—at one pole Canfield's with its gilt, plush, and master-paintings; at the other little "piker joints" on those same rows of Seventh Avenue. Around the edge, flourished the sure-thing men—as wireless wire-tappers, green-goods workers, old-fashioned "bunko-steerers." Such was the Tenderloin when Police Commissioner Roosevelt went round beating in iron doors with sledges and the Rev. Dr. Parkhurst raised his hands in

unassumed horror and District Attorney Jerome read a periodical riot act. Not the greenest yokel—and in those pre-automobile days yokels were really green—could doubt that this was the famous Tenderloin, flaunting itself.

Broadway jumped to Times Square and vicinage. In the period of its shift came that war which most of all wars changed human character and outlook; an invention, the cinema, which revolutionized all relations between the theater and its public; a Prohibition Act. Suddenly the theater cut loose and kicked up its heels. The hot crucibles of the war had melted the Victorian conventionalities away from life and from its expression, literature. Now, novelists and dramatists could draw from their packs those stories which none, in the days of the toothpick shoe and the puffed sleeve, would tolerate in print. They reveled in their new freedom, made license out of liberty. The movement toward what some one has called the "franker theater" came north to Broadway with the Theatre Guild. And the authors of this movement, such as Eugene O'Neill, Susan Glaspell, and Philip Moeller, began it artistically; simply and sincerely they delved deeper into life. It succeeded; and certain "commercial" managers, having lost to the moving picture that old and certain money-maker melodrama, clutched at the straw. Year by year their fare grew "higher"; by 1924 a small but well advertised proportion of the Broadway drama reeked with sex. Another season, and they were exploring dark, disordered rooms in the houses of the mind. Supplementing this came the craze for nudity. Conventionality has always permitted the stage to dress more scantily than the audience. When skirts swept the pavement, vaude-

ville could stop at the knees. But by 1920 all women wore street costumes which a bathing-beach would not have permitted in 1890; legs ceased to be a treat. When, following precedent, the theater began to trim this scantiness, it did not stop until it had taken almost everything off. By 1926 we had in some of the musical shows and girl shows the costume of Eden. Nudity at rest is to the discriminating eye as chaste as anything in nature; but the eye of the average citizen does not discriminate.

Moralists, both sound and sensational, clamored for reform. Old-line dramatists, disgusted with the themes presented for their consideration, knocked off and took a vacation on the Riviera or accepted the king's shilling from the movies. The Authors' League, anticipating the blight of a political censorship, held serious conferences. Finally appeared in the provinces, working its slow way toward a New York run, a play which for story and characterization exceeded all previous delving into abnormal sex. And the district attorney, without waiting for censorship, used the law he had. He arrested three plays—cast, authors, and management. Two agreed to close; one sustained conviction and a few jail sentences. The "Eve shows" saw at last the signs in the heavens. Out of the costume hampers came bodices and skirts. The craze, it seems, had run its course. . . . Well, the blow fell just in time. The commercial managers, never far-sighted, were killing off the old following of the theater.

Now logically, when the theaters ran so wild the illicit delight-makers should have exceeded all previous flauntings of vice, and Broadway should have become what

many a country parson says it is—the Modern Babylon. But here is the paradox: all this time, vice was fading further and further into the background of the Broadway scene. The painted and brazen ladies who used to sprinkle the night crowds gradually disappeared; and there were no more houses of all nations. Vice remains, but it makes pretense at least of staying behind doors. And I doubt if it is either organized or commercialized as at the turn of the century. In short, as the district became more impure in thought, it grew purer in deed. The moralist from the interior can now walk the Great White Way of nights and, unless he goes deliberately looking for it, find no themes for sermons on the Modern Babylon.

The saloons, of course, retreated indoors. Chased from site to site with each spasm of padlocking, they flourish nevertheless—brass rail and all, as of old. But to find them takes acquaintance. Also, there are gambling-houses, though none elaborate and palatial like Canfield's of old. I think now as I have always thought that reformers exaggerate the amount of gambling in New York. In cold truth, the American is not much of a gamester. If you disbelieve that, ask any dealer at the European casinos. They will tell you that while Frenchmen, Germans, Spaniards and Russians go mad over the tables, stake their whole fortunes on the turn of a card, the American risks a few thousand francs by way of getting a thrill and strolls laughing away. Monte Carlo and its imitators are almost the only resorts in Europe which do not angle for Americans first. Beside similar establishments in London, Paris, Brussels, or Berlin, these gambling-houses of the Broadway district seem poor and

shabby. The rich gamble no more in public clubs. They play high sometimes, but in the privacy of their own Park Avenue libraries.

Our real plungers are those modern swashbucklers of crime, the bootleggers. They need neither apparatus nor gilded surroundings, but only a pair of dice—craps being their special game. On nights when a half-million-dollar cargo has eluded the guard and landed, they will squat with yellow-backed bills between their fingers on the floor of a hotel room or a little back office, and risk a thousand dollars on each cast of the bones. For bootlegging—retail, wholesale, and high finance—has its headquarters in this fringe of the theaters. In fact, Times Square, I have heard, virtually controls the illicit liquor business of the whole United States. Into that, following the custom of New Yorkers, I shall not make strict inquiry!

Like a tinsel thread, the night clubs run a liaison between the life of the theater and this life of the underworld. Always, Broadway has had its devices for entertaining those to whom home was a place to go when everything else closed. Once the all-night people ate and drank the hours away. In the first decade of the century, Shanley's and Healey's and Churchill's and Murray's were in their glory—good food, good wines, beautiful glitter of decoration, pretty women. . . . Do you remember the colored-glass galley, glowing with hidden electric lights, at Murray's? Thompson & Dundy's original and inimitable Hippodrome, which for a year or so seemed center of population to New York, whipped up the vogue for Jack's across the street. Here art and letters mixed with



the bourgeoisie of night life. Jack's tolerated anything short of riot and violence; the waiters marveled at nothing. For example, the house where Bayard Veiller lived was going to be pulled down, wrecking operations to begin as soon as the tenants vacated. Therefore a trio of guests, dressed in overalls, brought sledge-hammers, picks and crowbars to a farewell party. Between dances, everyone took a turn at the demolition. Weary of the sport, the company adjourned to Jack's. There they checked their tools with their hats; and neither the check-room girl nor the head waiter so much as raised an eyebrow. The college student of those pre-war and ante-sheik days prided himself on being slightly rough; a hard-boiled gentility was the fashionable pose at Yale and Princeton. Week-ending in New York, the students finished off by habit at Jack's. Sometimes they broke into hostilities. Then you learned why the head waiter stood six feet three, why even the bus-boys had necks like pillars of the temple. A quiet signal; the waiters formed their famous flying wedge and by a sort of peculiar jiu-jitsu landed the disturbers, quite unharmed, in the gutter of Sixth Avenue. I have known reckless students to start trouble just by way of seeing them work—it was such a pretty maneuver!

Then San Francisco transformed New York. In spending its insurance money after the disaster, it naturalized the cabaret, a native of France. The performers used to walk past the tables, singing; and ladies of the audience, inspired by wine and the California fog, would rise and walk backward before them, weaving their bodies. This performance evolved into these original one-step dances, the turkey-trot, the bunny-hug and the Texas Tommy. The cabaret and the



new dances coursed eastward and hit New York with a splash. Up from the Argentine came the tango. In a year more, all New York was dancing. No longer did the restaurant rule on Broadway the hours after midnight. The cabaret swept the district. It began to break its general dancing with special performances of the tango and those complicated steps which succeeded it; arose the Castles, still the most famous names in their profession. Some manager perceived the uses of loose balloons and confetti, clappers and tin whistles, for stimulating hilarity; life in the cabarets became a perpetual New Year's eve.

The war—and prohibition. The cabarets, experimenting vaguely with this new law, retired underground and formed themselves into clubs with loose, casual membership and nominal dues. That accomplished nothing; for those who continued to “sell” after selling became illegal, there were other ways, surer if more expensive. But they continued to call themselves “night clubs,” though in truth they are only newfangled cabarets. As the musical shows and revues shed garment after garment, so did the louder of the night clubs. And to the back country, the name stood synonymous with Sin in Modern Babylon. By 1927 a hundred of these establishments fought for guests. Competition grew so intense that the more disreputable helped out the prohibition agents. They spied on rivals, reported them—it was a cutthroat game. The business, at first a bonanza, became overcrowded. In 1927—the reform year—dozens of them gave up and closed. Also, as the musical shows put on their skirts so did the night clubs.

The largest and most reputable are also the most pros-



MID-TOWN FROM BRYANT PARK



perous. Their rents, their gilded and frescoed ball-rooms, their world-famous orchestras, cost money. They dare not, even if they wish, put so much investment at the mercy of the federal padlock. In these places, the thirsty will plead in vain. Until Mayor Walker's curfew law, they resounded all night with mirth—clean and innocent, if also a little tense and tinny. There is dancing to music which would make a wooden Indian begin to shake his hips. The lighting scheme changes, and into a circlet of white illumination glide a pair of dancers who interpret Charleston or the Apache—that favorite of twenty years' standing in the night resorts of Broadway. More general dancing; and another change of lights. Now it is a vocal trio who shout jazz in metallic voices, or perhaps a Spanish ballad-singer with a guitar. Usually, following the rule of good showmanship, the management has a stunt-artist to give the impression of something doing every minute. The night club I know best employs a trick waiter. As you enter and find your table, this awkward fellow gets always in your way. Seated at last, you perceive that the audience is laughing at something. He dawns on you, as he has on the rest; you watch each party enter, hold your breath while he goes through his solemn and comic performance, and then join in the merriment. Presently he comes from the serving-room carrying a piece of ice carefully in a big spoon. At the edge of the floor he stops to meditate about something, and rests his spoon absently on the scalp of a bald-headed man. He strolls out on to the floor and gets tangled up with the dancers; he has adventures with a cotton fish on a silver tray; at last, revealing himself in his true character, he takes the spot-light

and does a comedy dance. At about two o'clock, when jaded mirth needs stimulus, balloons begin to fall in languid showers from the balcony; and the audience freshens up for a mimic battle with these harmless, unstable weapons.

Next in order, we come to Texas Guinan. In each of its changing eras, Broadway had some figure or set of figures who seemed its embodiment: Daly in the period when Ada Rehan's silvery voice and John Drew's restrained art dominated our stage; the Frohmans in the Zenda and Cyrano days; Weber and Fields in the period of the vaudeville craze; George M. Cohan; just after the war, the Guild group. Then for a season or two, leadership seemed to have come out from behind the proscenium arch; Texas Guinan took the scepter. Perhaps she is a deposed monarch now. Habitually, continually, the federal authorities padlocked her place. But it always came out in court that the management, wholly without connivance of this their employee, had sold the illegal stuff—or perhaps some misguided waiter had betrayed them. Next week, behold her established a block away. Any room with space and a dancing-floor would do for her. She needed no expensive mural decorations or elaborate effects of colored lights. She was illumination and decoration enough—a big and handsome woman who dressed from her shoe-heels to her hair in brilliants and sequins—anything that glittered—and whose magnetic personality sparkled above them all. When I sat under her I ignored the troops of girls clad simply and solely in a fringe round the waist, scant brassières, and high-heeled shoes; ignored even their acrobatic dances and their mussing-up of masculine hair as they emerged from the dressing-room. I

was too fascinated with watching the hostess perform. Seated on a table, a clapper in her plump, capable hands, she led the riotous mirth like a cheer-leader. Every night, as she guyed her audience, she dropped some phrase which passed into current slang—"butter and egg man" . . . "give the little girl a hand" . . . "he'll be happy till he sees the check." There was much art in her performance, and especially in her conservation of her forces. As she set the audience to singing with the chorus, her contralto voice came out like the boom of a Texas tornado. When she had them started, she let her notes die away and sat resting. And her eyes were as tired as a sleepy baby's.

The "hotsy-totsies," dregs of the night clubs, lurk in basements on the edge of the district. Often, when by acquaintance or persuasion you gain entrance, you find the platform all colored, the audience all white. Under a sleazy bower, a jazz orchestra of coal-black negroes sway and shout with their own music. Two or three mulatto comedians give semblance of plot to the comings and goings, the drillings and dancings, of girls in the same scanty night club uniform that we saw at Texas Guinan's. Their skins seem merely dusted with powdered chocolate or golden maize pollen. The audience, mostly men, take their pleasure with a chill sobriety. There are hard faces among them—hard and dangerous.

More than a hundred night clubs dotted Broadway last winter, paying enormous rent and the salary roll of musical shows. Who keeps them going? "The out-of-towner," says New York. "Jaded New York, draining the last drop of bitter pleasure," says the provincial preacher. Both are



right. The night clubs could not exist but for the buyers and traders who flock twice a year to the clothing district, set conveniently just below the gates of Times Square. These people must be entertained; they furnish probably the margin of profit. But New York has its regiment of habitués; people with independent means—wasters if you will—who dwell usually in the Broadway district. They are not always the tired-eyed and jaded young men whom the movies love to portray at the climax of their wasted lives. The middle-aged, drifting, unattached, and rich woman who carries her frivolity to her grave has become a recognized Broadway type. Her kind supports the professional sheiks and odd-job dancing partners who infest some of the Broadway hotels, and who look to me more like photographs than men. Finally, there are the normal, hard-working New Yorkers like you or me, who two or three times a season feel like having a little explosion of joy and go to dance all night as they did in their college days or their salad days—and in exactly the same spirit. He who has lived and survived to go ahead in New York with its solaces and temptations, its nervous jars and its constant intellectual stimulus, has learned to take almost anything or leave it alone. This element is perhaps the backbone of patronage for the better places.

I must not leave Broadway on this note. The night clubs, being a startling but temporary craze, have attracted entirely too much attention, even from me. When in imagination I see Broadway, they are only a tiny spot in the picture. I think of the crowds at night, struggling through the side streets to the last stand of the spoken theater now that

the road is dead—to the pleasure which is a compound of all legitimate pleasures. I think of the lives I know there under the shimmering lights—pretense and grease-paint for three hours a night, normality sweetened by friendship and sauced by intelligence for the long day. I think of the thousands working at strange tasks like scene-painting, costume-making, theatrical journalism; working as steadily as the rest of us. I think of the men who through sheer fluid ability have expanded in this district to position and fame and stable wealth—hundreds of them. I think of the play of wit at the Friars and the Lambs. I see those bright early-September days when the world and his wife are back from vacation, and rehearsals and engagements have begun—when Broadway brightens up with costumes arranged to catch the eye of the manager, sings with sprightly conversation in mellow, carrying voices. I see the people of the theater scurrying up the alleys to the stage-door at half-past seven. I remember that exciting actors' strike when Marie Dressler, with the mien of a determined goddess, led her graceful but resolute cohorts in procession. I recall the stream of excited men emerging from the ramps of the new Madison Square Garden on the night of a championship fight, their chests high and their walk a trifle swaggering with suppressed desire to be what they have beheld. I relive those suppers after the performance when wit and philosophy and good counsel sat with us as guests. . . . All that is my Broadway!

### *Chapter XXXIII*

#### THE TEMPLE OF ROMANTIC SCIENCE

GENERAL GRANT, being then president of the United States, laid in 1874 the corner-stone of the American Museum of Natural History; and in 1877 President Hayes dedicated it to science and learning. The long low, ample building, with its additions and spurs making a gridiron pattern over Manhattan Square, seems to symbolize and immortalize their period. In the seventies the bounty of machine production was still to man a joyous miracle. We spent our materials in the spirit of a foolish heir squandering his new inheritance. Our women swathed themselves in enveloping wraps and dolmans heavy with embroidery, and in cumbersome bonnets. The hoop-skirt of the middle nineteenth century was nothing but a frame enabling woman to expand on her draperies an ostentatious quantity of superfluous cloth. We loaded our interiors with things, things, things, until the parlors of the period looked like overcrowded museums. Finally, as the lavish period wore on, the craze for waste material reached the exterior of our houses. Did we add a turret or a tower—as we generally did—we produced a pretentiously debased copy, a heavy peasant sister, of the airy, aristocratic turrets and oriels which lighten Chinon or

Chambord. This was the hoop-skirt period of architecture. Germany, who came later to her wealth, went later through the same phase. And to this day the older houses of Central Park West, which had their affluent heyday just when the museum was building, so resemble the city of the kaisers that I have caught myself wondering subconsciously why the signs are all in English.

But the red-brown museum is at least proportionate and innocent of its kind, and built well for its uses. Also the founders, showing more foresight or spirit of democracy than those of the Metropolitan, laid it not only near the center of the greater city but at a point accessible to rapid transportation. They were mildly indifferent to beauty. The vestibule reminds me of a school; it even smells academic. Beauty you find of isolated objects like marine forms, worked Mayan gold or native Indian designs. But that is incidental and accidental. No more were the founders on the trail of romance; yet that came in abundance. Pry into the history of specimens here arrayed in cupboards and cases, and you will find that the museum stands founded in adventure, that the aura of its history is a series of man-  
tales such as Kipling never dared write.

If you are starting an art museum, no matter how heavily endowed, you acquire your exhibits by purchase or by waiting the slow and uncertain development of native art. The materials for a modern scientific museum are in the heavens above, the earth below, or the waters under the earth. It takes money to get them; but supplementing the money you must have enterprise. Every worthy scientific museum in the world is home port for a navy of adventur-

ers. This one began its job with characteristic American energy. Morris K. Jessup was its great patron, virtually its founder. He set a little army of science at the comparatively prosaic task of collecting common woods and native birds; but he ordered forth his scouts and pioneers to the fossil-beds in which our Rocky Mountain region is so rich. Having much influence with James J. Hill, he got free transportation for his specimens, and dumped into Manhattan Square car-loads of bones as big as tree-trunks. Assembled, this junk became nucleus for the startling collection of Jurassic reptiles, probably the finest in the world. For fifty years its expeditions have scoured the waste and hidden places of the world. When our mountains still held unexplored wilderness, they toiled by pack-train up to the dizzy passes of the Rockies, looking for native fauna. On the search for rare butterflies or obscure reptiles, they have navigated the mysterious rivers of the Amazon valley. They have scaled the Himalayas, crawled across the Gobi and the Sahara, threaded the Congo basin and the Ruindi plain. Adventurers in other fields have carried the Museum of Natural History as a side-line. On one of his expeditions, Peary, after three failures, hoisted aboard and brought back the giant meteorite known as the Tent. And here, as a kind of offering at a shrine of science, rest permanently the sled with which Peary reached the north pole and the one which carried Amundsen to the south. Roosevelt shot in Africa not only for the Smithsonian Museum but for this.

These are eminent men, whose exploits live in common history. However, a thousand adventurers obscure to the public, though often important in their own little corners





THE GAY WHITE WAY





of science, have carried on just as bravely and romantically. Forever as I lounge past the cases I am encountering some little man or other who is peering at a specimen with a sustained gaze which betrays the expert. If further mark of identification be needed, he has usually a coat of permanent tan. And I know him as one of those swashbucklers of science who—if not for this museum, then for some other—has counted cold, heat, hunger, thirst, distance, poison fangs, cruel claws and hostile arrows a part of the day's work.

Two men—one still living, the other but lately dead—incarnate the spirit of this museum. From his secluded office on the top floor, Henry Fairfield Osborn governs it as a sort of general manager. The public knows him for author of "Men of the Old Stone Age"; and his own profession, for the greatest of paleontologists. He incarnates the modern scientific spirit; the savant who is also a man of the world. As for Carl Akeley, I used to sit with him in his studio workshop watching him mold a frame for his gorillas and listening to his reminiscences. What had he not seen and lived! And how American was his career! Born on a farm, he had like many boys of his era developed a passion for "stuffing birds." This led to a permanent job with a taxidermist. Dissatisfied with the old clumsy and unsanitary process of mere stuffing, he invented and perfected a papier-mâché frame molded according to the animal's anatomy. He took to hunting with the rifle that he might obtain specimens, and with the moving-picture camera that he might record wild life. That apparatus was distinctly unsatisfactory for the purpose. Thereupon Akeley put his old-

fashioned Yankee ingenuity to work and invented a simple little contrivance which made possible news-reel photography. Through molding papier-mâché frames he learned sculpture; the fruit thereof is his spirited and realistic groups of natives hunting lions with the spear, exhibited in the African collection. He began to record his trips on paper; and so produced two or three vivid books of African hunting-adventure. His most famous exploit was his venture into the unknown Gorilla Country of Belgian Africa. The group of four gorillas, killed and mounted with his own hand, immortalizes that expedition.

Akeley resented somewhat the title of big-game hunter. "I'm a rotten shot!" he said once. He killed for scientific ends; and he had a vivid sympathy with the feelings of the killed. Once a leopard half disemboweled him; and once an elephant crushed his ribs and all but flattened him out with the wipe of a giant foot. "Well," he said concerning those adventures, "what could I expect? In the jungle, man is a pernicious kind of rattlesnake. Can you blame them for trying to abate the nuisance?" When he killed a gorilla, he felt almost as though he were committing murder. He made himself the champion of this strange and interesting species; strove to destroy the idea which Du Chaillu made popular, that the old man of the jungle is a bloodthirsty ogre. In some of his moods he reversed evolution and regarded them as decadent men. He died, as all the world knows, on his last gorilla expedition.

Perhaps, however, Roy Chapman Andrews of the living generation typifies the museum just as well. Unlike Akeley, he has a background of scientific education. And whereas

Akeley concerned himself with life as it is, Andrews searches "the dim backward and abysm of time" for the origins of life. Hence his picturesque and romantic camel-and-Ford expedition to the deserts of Western China, where he found the dinosaur eggs. This discovery was a furious popular hit. Naturally; the thought of the baby dinosaurs hatching like chickens, and like chickens gathered under the membranous wings of their grotesque mother, carried the public mind back across millions of years, and illustrated, as a mere abstract treatise could never have done, the majestic continuity of life on this planet. Andrews brought back other data more valuable to science. For example, he showed the identity of certain prehistoric Asiatic reptiles with American species; which goes to prove that Asia and North America were once a single continent. But the public sees only the dinosaur eggs.

The museum itself, object of all this adventuring, stands now the greatest and best of its kind in the world, though the Field Museum of enterprising Chicago has of late pressed it somewhat. I can touch only the high lights. It took the lead in preserving relics of our fast-vanishing Indians. If this part of the collection does not show so much above-ground as the Museum of the American Indian, that is for lack of exhibition space. Behind the closed doors at the end of the corridors lie study collections for the benefit of research workers. However, the visible accumulation is so large that one who tries to see it all in a day develops "museum fatigue." With the help of sculpture and painting the museum has reproduced Indian life. In a tepee of the Algonquins a life-size grandmother is telling the children a

fairy-tale of the tribe. Against a back-drop, representing high and mysterious Walpi, sit Hopis grinding corn and weaving. The spirited figures of this group come from no less cunning a hand than Mahonri Young's. In the center of the main hall stands a ceremonial canoe of the Alaskan Indians, as big as a ship's long-boat. Slaves paddle it; dignified chiefs, on their way to a potlatch, stand on deck in their ceremonial robes; and all life-size. The troops of school-children improving their minds give but languid attention to Darwin Hall with its display of strange marine forms, and to the health exhibit with its arrangements of calories on platters. But when they enter the Indian collection, the teachers have to rush about suppressing the squeals and whoops. The elder visitors take more interest, perhaps, in the Hall of Reptiles where are exhibited Andrews's dinosaur eggs. Over this collection rises like the frame for a sky-scraper the skeleton of a great brontosaurus, largest of the archaic prehistoric forms. (But did you know that a common whale is for size the peak of all animate creation?) Grouped round him rise on their hind legs flesh-eating dinosaurs, the tigers of their period. The unique object of this gallery is a dinosaur so petrified by the peculiar chemical composition of the marsh in which he drowned that in places the skin, patterned like that of a python, shows every tiniest pore and wrinkle.

Its enemies have advertised the Hall of the Descent of Man. There, surrounded by skeletons of mammoth mastodons and giant rhinoceroses, stand in replica the famous skulls, from Trinil through Piltdown to Cro-Magnon, on which science has built tentatively the story of our ancestry.

Every time a fundamentalist preaches against such a blasphemous display, the museum sees the effect in an increased crowd before the exhibit.

Mayan exploration is the archæological craze of the day, and this museum has begun to profit thereby. The painted, grotesquely beautiful pillars from the Temple of the Tigers center a group of massive sculptures. Rarest of all, however, is the collection of Mayan worked gold ornaments and utensils. It represents \$140,000 in raw gold alone and I know not what in beauty and interest. The touch of J. Pierpont Morgan the elder, king among American collectors, has enriched even this purely scientific collection; he gave it the complete collection of precious stones. Repeating superlatives, no other museum approaches ours in number and variety of stuffed birds. Ornithologists come from all over the world to study here. This department exemplifies a method of display in which, I believe, the American Museum was a pioneer. They are shown so far as possible in a native habitat constructed of a painted canvas background, papier-mâché rocks and earth, artificial but realistic herbage. The method has reached its perfection in the superb exhibition of American and African mammals. With the winter peaks of the Continental Divide in the background, a pack of timber-wolves ranges the snows. In a ledged cave of the Rockies, a litter of puma cubs are jumping up to meet their mother as she enters with a newly killed fawn in her mouth. From the thick grass of a jungle appears a raging lion. Resting among the forest leaves sit Akeley's four priceless gorillas. The African collection seems now a little crowded and ill arranged. That is all for lack of space.



Somehow this institution, unlike the Metropolitan, has never much inspired the imagination of the philanthropic rich.

I am merely sketching here; and I shall end by mentioning the outstanding dime-museum feature, an object for which Barnum would have traded his circus. Once a naked, prehistoric Indian miner of Peru ventured with his tools into a vein of raw copper. It caved in on him, smothering him to death. This was a wet mine; the dripping waters impregnated his corpse with copper salts, averting decay. He became in the course of centuries a copper man. He died hard; his clenched toes, his hand pushing upward against the weight upon him, prove that. Otherwise, it is not corpse-like or revolting; it seems a statue, graven from metal.

An integral part of the city's educational system this museum; it has repudiated scientific snobbery. It belongs not only to high learning but to the people. Its extension work sends specimens and lectures to every school in the greater city. Behind the doors which seal its corridors classes in special topics hold constant session. A pathetic detail here: in one of the darker rooms you may see any day a class of children sitting with stuffed animals in their laps. These are the blind, learning natural history by sense of touch!

## *Chapter XXXIV*

### THE BLACK BELT

EVEN when Wall Street stood northern boundary to that little provincial city at the tip of Manhattan Island, there were negroes among its inhabitants—slaves of course. After the State abolished slavery, the freedmen settled down along Mulberry Street. Crowded out of that, they moved to the degenerating mansions of Greenwich Village; again uprooted, they migrated to a district near the southwestern corner of Central Park. That was late in the nineteenth century. In that lively little skirmish, the Spanish War, negro troops took San Juan Hill. And this new home of the African became, by rite of christening with printer's ink, the San Juan Hill District. But during the period preceding the World War, Broadway took another of its nervous jumps. In the blocks impinging on the Park, new theaters and palatial moving-picture houses arose by the score. Their necessary, serviceable outskirts coveted San Juan Hill; the time had come for the negroes to move again.

Harlem—or at least that part of it running eastward from the central ridge of Manhattan—was then mostly a German district. Solid blocks of tenements or flat-houses bordered the wide, parked highways of Lenox Avenue and

Seventh Avenue. Where 136th Street and the three cross streets above break against the central ridge, stood behind little front gardens and spreading horse-chestnut trees respectable rows of comfortable "single tenant" houses. Here dwelt prosperous German families of the second generation. If you wanted real beer, in the appropriate surroundings of family parties, cheerful discussion, and heavenly music, you went to the *Bierstuben* and casinos of Harlem. But a current stronger than human will was beating against the Germans also. Spite of a deliberate effort to keep Germany-in-America a spiritual part of the Fatherland, the third generation was melting into the native population and moving away. Real-estate values declined; no one knew exactly why. In despair, a venturesome owner rented his apartment to negroes. White flee always from a black invasion. By the following autumn, the whole block had passed into negro tenancy. Through block after block the invasion spread, until these pioneers had established a new quarter north of 135th Street. Even before the war, the colony had thrust far south of 135th Street, its Main Street. The war brought unprecedented demand for common labor, gave first impulse to that negro trek from the South which is revising the customs and social composition even of Mississippi and South Carolina. The new-comers found here greater racial tolerance than in their native South; and even more than the universal economic urge, the aspiration toward equality is governing motive with the Afro-American. To a thousand meeting-houses below Mason and Dixon's line went back the word that Manhattan was the promised land. In the normal course of events, the end of the war should have

brought disillusion and a dreary exodus. But just at that era we shut the flood-gates against European immigration. New York had always counted on the greenhorn to dig its ditches and wash its pans. As one generation of these newcomers worked up to independent business or to skilled labor, another came on. That was over now. Into the place of the green European immigrant stepped the negro. And every outburst of race trouble in the South blew northward a new tribe of invaders.

By 1924 the black district ran unbroken from the foot of the central ridge on the west to the Harlem River on the east, and from the low Thirties to the high Forties. Bursting its barriers again, it now flowed across 125th Street. Though negroes mark all the shopping crowds, that thoroughfare—we call it the Broadway of Harlem—retains its Caucasian character. But through the nine blocks of apartment-houses which run southward to the Park, colored squares checker the map. Finally, a spur of the colony has lately shot northeastward from the Hundred-and-Forties and is climbing the central ridge of our island. We have now three hundred thousand negroes in Greater New York, of whom more than two hundred thousand dwell solidly in this district.

Two thirds as large as Providence is this city incased by an alien city; larger than Dallas or Des Moines. To the perceptions of the casual stroller, it seems almost as self-contained. The seeming is real, except for one important factor. Its economic foundation rests elsewhere. It has no important factories. The very retail trade lies mostly in the control of Jews and Greeks. The dollars which have given the negro belt its modest and moderate prosperity are earned with

hard labor by domestic servants who, following modern custom, lodge not in the houses of their employers but in Harlem; by the army of Pullman porters and waiters who travel out of our great railroad terminals; by the gangs of wharfingers along the waterfront; by the diggers in our subways; by porters, waiters, doorkeepers, elevator operators in our great hotels; by practitioners of a hundred other humble occupations. However, the negro colony is following, as its native or outwardly imposed limitations permit, the typical course of a foreign settlement in Manhattan. Slowly it is rising. Custom bars to the race the doors of most factories. But there are the "home needle trades" practised hitherto by the Slavs, Semites, and Italians in East Side tenements. The negro servant-girl, like the Teutons and Latins who preceded her, chafes in time against domestic service. So as the East Side steps up to a higher stage of its destinies, the home needle trades are passing into the hands of negresses. Sometimes these women have the creative touch. Two or three are highly paid designers with Fifth Avenue modistes. Others have gone into business for themselves and taken over the dressmaking of Harlem. Last year they gave a fashion show; and white garment experts who came to scoff, or to eye the pretty octoroon models, remained to admire.

The wave of immigration brought its thousands of skilled laborers, especially in the building trades. The fairytales of equality which lured them north proved even in the beginning grotesquely untrue. For the labor-unions refused them membership, branded them as "unfair." But trades-unions in Manhattan do not usually extend their restrictions



to repair work. There was a loophole! Black labor crawled through it. Now five hundred negro calciminers work in the greater city; and carpenters, plasterers and masons by thousands more. Slow business all this; but always inch by inch upward.

"Colored" they call themselves; and in fact the word describes with just accuracy the negro folk of Harlem. To a degree which we cannot understand, these two hundred thousand are daring pioneers. The negro with enterprise enough to pull up stakes and trek from the cotton fields or from a small Southern town, has usually his admixture of enterprising Caucasian blood. Not more than a fifth of them, I should say from observation, are pure black. The rest run the spectrum from white with a high reddish tinge under the skin, through dusky yellow, bright tan, deep saddle-color, and umber brown, to dark chocolate. Also there are red tints and tinges. Some of our Indian tribes forbade admixture with negroes; but some, like the Creeks of Georgia, intermarried. As did the whites, however, they thrust the mulatto to the negro side of the barrier. If our native Indians of the New York region ever mixed with the whites, all trace of the union is lost. But the last of the Manhattans and the Passamaquoddies of Long Island bred with negro slaves; their blood survives in Harlem alone. And the West Indian negroes, an element which holds itself just a trifle aloof, brought the Carib mixture. The Indian strain makes handsome people, especially when there is also a white admixture. I have seen negresses of this triple origin with figures as slim and straight as birch-trees, profiles delicately aquiline, and skins like a gold-of-Ophir rose.



Just when the Harlem boom was in its first reverberation, we invented jazz music—itsself a borrowing from the negro—and that proper setting, the cabaret. The race, still poor by white standards, was from its own viewpoint flush with spoils of the war. The negroes started their own cabarets, which grew into night clubs distinguished by dancing that had a barbaric swing and abandon, and by most excellent jazz music. The cabaret shows grew into whole performances. Presently Harlem developed "Shuffle Along," a new thing in musical shows; librettists, composers, and performers all negroes. News traveled southward of an extraordinary young negro actress. Broadway went slumming in Harlem to marvel at the lean, copper-colored, supple Florence Mills. Suddenly the sensation-seekers of our electric light belt perceived the possibility of a new thrill. They stampeded to the negro night clubs. When everything else closed, the jaded of Broadway finished up at a "black joint" in Harlem. Running over its history of the past century, I find that New York is always for a time interested and curious over a new "colony." Here it ran true to form. In circles which we should have called Bohemian twenty-five years ago, interest in the negro became almost fashionable. Presently there was better reason than cabarets. Jessie Faucett published her "There Is Confusion" and Walter White his "Fire in the Flint," both acute studies of negro life by negroes. James Weldon Johnson, already known as a poet, issued with his brother, J. Rosamund Johnson, the "Book of Negro Spirituals," which set all New York to crooning. Already out of a fine stock company performing in Harlem had come Gilpin, the actor, to set Broadway

afire by his interpretation of "Emperor Jones." Arrives now Roland Hayes of the golden throat, with full prestige of his European appearances, to fill Carnegie Hall. Our white novelists and playwrights began to notice the quarter—and somewhat to the damage of its reputation. Carl Van Vechten's novel, "Nigger Heaven," and Sheldon and MacArthur's play, "Lulu Belle," best known of these works, picture only the cabaret district in its loudness and oddity. Now notoriously this hectic acre owes its being mainly to the Caucasian slummer, and every foreign colony among us has a central vice district. But for Caucasian encouragement, the negro vice quarter would probably attract no more attention than corresponding districts of the East Side.

For one very good reason: the negro is poor. The two hundred thousand generally live close-packed in tenements; and they work at occupations which, being unorganized, still demand long and exacting hours. That region of separate houses shadowed by the great central ridge and the Gothic buildings of City College, figures in popular legend as Negro Millionaires' Row. Concerning this, one who knows the economics of the district has given me the cold facts. "Madame" Walker, who invented a compound for taking the kinks out of hair, had certainly a large fortune. She is dead; and her daughter and heiress has taken her heritage to an estate up the Hudson. One man, still living, may have made a million out of real estate; he is not talking, and no one else knows for certain. Otherwise these occupants of individual houses belong to the professional element—physicians, dentists, orchestra leaders. Probably only two or three could live amply on the income of their accumulated

funds. We have no negro merchant princes. In the early days of the Harlem boom, a few of these domestic immigrants brought their savings from the South and went into retail trade. They lacked experience; in two years, the all-pervading Greek had most of their shops. There is no negro bank in New York, and only one insurance company.

Eventually the negro investors found their way into real estate. They own now at least sixty per cent of their own district. The so-called Millionaires' Row holds many little fortunes of a hundred thousand dollars or so, mostly in apartment-house property. The negro millionaires will arrive in the next generation. For Manhattan is ever clamorous for land. As the fine apartment houses crowd even to Spuyten Duyvil, the white will begin to look enviously on this quarter so conveniently placed, so spaciouly laid out. The negro will move again, on to the outlying boroughs whither the East Side is going now. But before he departs, he can make his displacers pay through the nose.

The real social life of Harlem groups itself not round the cabarets but the churches. This most religious race has brought all the trappings of its faith. Throughout that better district in the shadow of high-built City College, façades bear the gilded signs of this or that separatist congregation or obscure sect. The Abyssinian Orthodox Church deserves separate mention. A negro Episcopalian clergyman led forth this schism; in doctrine and ritual it resembles the Greek Church. The Abyssinian Jews really come from the land which gives their congregation its name. A lost offshoot of Israel, they practise the old rites of the Temple and hold themselves aloof from the Christian negroes. Two Roman

Catholic Churches, built when this was a white district, have passed over to tenancy of African congregations. The Metropolitan Baptist Church and the Abyssinian Baptist Church, occupying fine structures of their own, stand forth for their social work. Possibly the largest congregation of all, St. Philip's Episcopalian, has a long history. It derives from the termination of slave days, when the diocese faced the question of seating the negroes in separate galleries or giving them a church of their own. The bishop chose the latter alternative. With its church, the new congregation acquired an endowment of land. As it moved north from Mulberry Street to Greenwich Village, to San Juan Hill, and finally to Harlem, it reinvested with shrewd appreciation of real-estate values. Now in its own right it is one of the richest churches on the island, and it has three thousand communicants. Negro architects designed its sanctuaries and its ample parish-houses; negro priests serve its altars.

The Caucasian churches of Manhattan find it a little difficult to maintain their fringing activities of sewing-circles and men's clubs and altar-gilds. The metropolis of the world offers so many counter-attractions! But to the negro the church is still Mother Church. Its literary societies, its strawberry festivals, its singing societies, bound the social horizon for three quarters of Harlem. And in ways more spiritual and more practical than stimulating of the easy African laughter, does Mother Church here serve her children. If ever people needed what we call social work, it was these new-comers from the warm and spacious South, now crowded into close tenements of the unkindly and impersonal North. Concerning the elementary hygiene neces-

sary to keep alive in urban conditions, they knew next to nothing. Long, the birth-rate and death-rate stood very nearly balanced. The churches, by all means the strongest social force with the negroes, have taken this matter in hand. Supported by such agencies as the Urban League, they are bringing hygiene to Harlem; and the death-rate has begun a slow but steady decline.

There they sit among us; representatives often of families almost as long rooted in America as the Knickerbockers, and yet alien. Other races are working toward assimilation; by the third generation, their average member has passed into the American strain. But here—unless the Nordic revises his ideas and emotions—is a people forever apart. So far, they have settled down into tolerant New York without disturbance. Since the Civil War, we have never known a race riot. But one need only read their newspapers to realize that a ferment is working among them—the baffled urge toward equality. To what that may lead, only the future will know.







ALONG RIVERSIDE DRIVE

## *Chapter XXXV*

### THE CLOISTERS

LONG Manhattan ends to the northward with a projection like that of a knife-blade from its haft. The dominating ridge, whose earlier rise forms an impressive pedestal for St. John the Divine and Columbia University, dips to the valley of Manhattanville, rises again, and splits as it enters this sliver of land into two hogbacks. The lesser borders the Harlem River, which divides Manhattan from the Bronx; the greater goes straight on to Spuyten Duyvil. Broadway, here only a poor country relation of that imperial avenue whose down-town course we know so well, runs along the bottom of the valley between. And the hogback slopes so abruptly on its western side as to suggest a bit of mountain scenery.

Only in late years have the compact and composite building-masses of Manhattan flowed into this narrow peninsula. The conquest is not yet complete. Up toward the point are still gardens, patches of primeval woodland, deserted estates on the Hudson awaiting their conversion into building-lots, even five small truck farms. Not so many years ago, these husbandmen of Manhattan had the humor to stage a county fair.

Motoring northward along the tops of the ridges, one passes a monotony of tall apartment-houses which break here and there into some notable group of public buildings. First your car shoots under the arch of a high, ornamental iron gate; to right and left stands the College of the City of New York. Stands, I say; but its eastern structures seem to hang to the edge of the abrupt hill, from which their windows sweep the pea-soup flow of the Harlem River and the roofs of the Bronx. Post, the architect, quarried the material from the dark-gray stone which supports Manhattan, relieved the somberness of this main material with bold trimmings of terra-cotta. His design is collegiate Gothic with original and successful variations of his own. Among our three major universities—Columbia, City College, and New York University over in the Bronx,—this has to my eye by far the finest building-plan. You swing through a valley to another ridge. More apartment-houses, as close-packed and monotonously uniform as the cells in a honey-comb. Flash! and this breaks at 155th Street into the "Huntington Group," all the design of Charles P. Huntington; a glimpse of gardens, of pleasant and proportionate Renaissance detail in soft and cheerful gray stone. Among the five institutions housed here the best known are the Hispanic Museum and the Museum of the American Indian; perhaps the most beautiful, the Spanish Church of Our Lady of Esperanza. And just apart from the mass stand Goodhue's Chapel of the Intercession, its interior a jewel-casket of painted Gothic and stained windows. Fate so arranged it that Goodhue, poet among our architects, left little of his handiwork in New York. His largest concep-

tions, like the Nebraska State Capitol, adorn the interior country.

Flash! And a few blocks to northward shoots up a step-backed sky-scraper which resembles nothing so much as a sheaf of towers gathered up in the measureless hand of some god. No great building of Manhattan goes to such extremes in the new idea of architectural design; and none has achieved more thrill and meaning. Elsewhere the flaw of sky-scraper design is the multiplicity and monotony of windows. Here the architect, instead of trying to remove the emphasis, has gloried in many windows, reveled in them! He has achieved not only arresting grandeur but gaiety. It will need gaiety, this cluster of buildings; for here, in the generations to come, men and women will struggle with death. This is the new Medical Center, all one hospital.

Long before, the mathematically square patterns of central Manhattan have surrendered to contour. Across the ridge, the streets meander and wind as in the down-town district. Also, Manhattan has undergone a subtle change. The busy corner of Broadway and 181st Street, for example, looks like anything but modern New York. Rather is it the main business street of some little county-seat in the Middle West. Through a maze of steep highways you curve on to the higher ridge and traverse Fort Washington Avenue; where the excavator still turns up bullets, belt-buckles, and bones from the northerly actions in the Battle of Long Island. Here comes a touch of the wild and rustic—vacant areas overgrown with Manhattan's primeval maples and horse-chestnuts, streets lined with shade-trees and fringed with pleasant gardens. Straight ahead, an empty

mansard-roof house clings to the edge of the hill, its windows long ago sacrificed to the favorite sport of small boys. It memorializes old, leisurely, affluent days when this piece of wildwood was seat for country villas. The ground we have just traversed belonged once to the show estate of James Gordon Bennett. Eastward, across the gulch which is Broadway, the packed masses of new apartment-houses, the flashing silhouettes of taxicabs, the rattle and rush of distant rapid transit. And—

Your driver, finding the number, 698 Fort Washington Avenue, stops beside a hundred feet of low stone wall. Here lies a garden which at first sight seems somewhat neglected, but beautifully so. Through little maples and chestnuts wander paths irregularly flagged. In May—the season when I last saw this restful acre—a few sparse narcissi and jonquils dot the studiously unkempt grass. Fleur-de-lis is budding along the borders of the paths, and sparrows nest among the new green shoots of the maples. Before you stands a high, crude stone cross, its pedestal and its beam blossoming into half-obliterated tracery. Beyond is a Gothic arch, half ruined. To the left stands a fantastic dragon with a design like that of cotton-print on his wings. The dark brick wall which backs him is paneled in high relief with broken sculpture of holy scenes. At the right background, their pink tint blending with the distant, roseate haze of that gulf over Broadway, runs a quadrangle of unroofed arches. The northeastern corner is stopped by a brick structure which seems like a church except that it bears no cross. Rosettes of old iron stud its heavy red doors. Beside it, under a tier of Gothic arches, stands a marble Virgin with the serene,



swaying pose, the long sweep of draperies, which the medieval artist loved. You are come suddenly into the Middle Ages. You realize now that Manhattan is unrestful, shrill.

. . .

These are the Cloisters—once the Barnard Cloisters. Before we enter that low building at the corner which houses the gems of the collection, let me tell how this quiet beauty came into being. George Gray Barnard, master of monumental sculpture, knows and loves his France. For half a century that French medieval architecture which we call the Gothic has stood in high favor. The world came later to an appreciation of medieval sculpture and small craftsmanship. Barnard, in his youthful tramping through France, had acquired a taste for the work of these primitive carvers in wood and stone, with their crude ideas on human anatomy, their high sense of beauty, their play of fancy and their humanity. In 1906, ahead of the rush, he began his collection.

He went at it with native Yankee shrewdness. Ignoring dealers, he studied the history of the great French religious establishments. Most of them, he knew, were wrecked in the disorders of the Revolution. From the débris, the peasants had purloined such pieces of carved stone as suited domestic or agricultural purposes. He had seen ornamented pillars serving as pedestals for the tables at which the harvesters ate in the fields, tombs used as horse-troughs, carved capitals degraded to pedestals for chopping-blocks. He scoured the neighborhood of the vanished abbeys. Piece by piece he acquired for a song most of the pillars from four different cloisters. He went further. Often when an abbey perished,



some reverent peasant piously stole a figure of a Virgin or a saint, concealed it until the storm was over, and then brought it out to crown his shrine. Later, perhaps, it seemed archaic to the family; and they put it away. Barnard searched attics like a junkman.

In car-loads, he shipped his discoveries to New York. With the same original eye which led him to Gothic sculpture, he built his studio on this high crest of Manhattan. Year by year, as his means permitted, he worked to create a proper setting for his treasure. So came into being this monkish close and this little museum in the form of a church. In 1925 the burden of it became too great for a private citizen. The Metropolitan Museum, through the gift of John D. Rockefeller, Jr., took it over as its sole branch museum. At the same time, Mr. Rockefeller gave it his own collection of fifty medieval sculptures and primitive paintings. Since then, Joseph Breck, assistant art director of the Metropolitan, has had charge. He has placed the Rockefeller gifts, finished the restoration of the Cuxa cloisters, and done it all with perfect taste. But the conception, plan, and spirit remain Barnard's.

So we enter the church through the ruined arch, once the side of a famous pilgrim shrine near Avignon. The red doors are modern, built as setting for a superb and complete set of iron hinges, studs, and locks. "They don't open inward as church doors should, but we must obey the fire laws!" says Mr. Breck. Inside, however—and appropriately folded inward—hang another set of doors whose iron-black oak prove their antiquity. And then comes the view of the shadowy interior.

You are looking into the colors and shadows of a small cruciform Gothic church. True, the material is common New York brick; but even the old Gothic builder, though he preferred stone, had no rabid prejudice against the humbler material. It has, however, a complicated completeness; the ambulatories, the gallery, the triforium, the transepts, the apse with its colored windows, the recessed high altar and the shrines make it seem a cathedral in miniature. Though it be unconsecrated and unused for worship, tall candles burn on the altars, and the air is reverent with incense. A saffron-colored awning, stretched to moderate the glare from a studio skylight above, admits a subdued light which blends mystically with the tinted beams from old stained-glass windows. Detail begins to creep out of the shadows; you taste the savor of those European churches which for six hundred years have been gathering and assimilating decorations, memorials, offerings of pious souls. On the pavement before the door lies the tomb-statue of a knight, his recumbent form clad in chain-armor, his little dog asleep at his feet. In the corner of the pavement to right and left are set two inscribed tablets. One, ornamented with battered and faded fleurs-de-lis, rested above the buried entrails of the Princess Blanche of France; the other, a pattern of dim, rune-like inscriptions on gray stone, is almost certainly part of the sarcophagus laid over St. Guilhem, warrior and holy man, who died in the sixth century. What vicissitudes of states and dynasties have brought these two bits of holy marble to this ridge beyond Thule, within sound of blasting for a new subway . . .

A sort of screen divides this eastern end of the nave

from the main body of the church. It rises in a series of ancient pillars with capitals which flower in medieval fancies of hell, engagingly childlike representations of miracles, or shapes of flowers that never grew. Each supports a statue. Beyond and above lie Gothic and Romanesque pieces literally by thousands. There must be fifty statues of the Virgin and Child alone. But it is the triumph of Barnard's arrangement that nowhere does the place seem crowded or cluttered or museum-like. I am not writing a guide-book; I shall itemize only here and there. First, the architectural fragments. These come from three monastery cloisters; the finest and most nearly complete set from St.-Guilhem-le-Désert. This abbey of the Pyrenese stood until the Revolution, a proud and famous house with a history of twelve centuries behind it. Generally only the carved capitals have survived; most of the pillars went long ago to the lime-kiln. But enough remained to give the pattern. For the row about the balcony arcades, Barnard and his workmen or pupils created replacements. And the interest lies in those flowering and pictured capitals whereon the medieval carver let loose his fancy. Some bear arms of lord or prelate cunningly intertwined with leaf-designs; some, grotesque shapes of beasts that never were; some, whole dramas from the Bible or the lives of the saints; some, mere whimsical invention in strange form.

In the statues of the Mother and Child, one can trace the full course of medieval art from primitive conventionality through the appealing humanity of the Gothic centuries to that sophisticated skill which degenerated into excessive realism. The older type stresses the stiff majesty of

the Virgin. She sits like a queen enthroned; the child on her knees is a little monarch. St. Francis of Assisi, the guide will tell you, brought emotion and humanity into the church and into religious art. And those Virgins of the great period are nothing if not women and mothers. I have not sufficient learning to say why the Gothic sculptors loved to introduce a bird into this group; but the detail recurs again and again. To the right of the high altar stands a Virgin and Child of the fourteenth century, as much admired by artists as anything in this collection. Now on the Virgin's bosom has alighted a young bird, which clings to her, confident of protection; and the Child stretches out his arms to it. In another, the bird nestles unafraid in the Child's hands. In still another it perches on the mother's shoulder.

By the entrance to the tiny sacristy—furnished forth with oaken cupboards and priestly wardrobes of age-black oak—stands a smiling Virgin with a face so sweetly individual that the artist must have graven her from memory of some loved woman. Near the eastern entrance hangs a bust of a Madonna giving breast to the baby; most tender in posture and pleasantly notable, too, for the rich garb of patterned silk which the sculptor has painted upon her. Finally, the gallery holds a Virgin which to the humanist is perhaps the most arresting object in these cloisters. Almost life-size, it comes apparently from some group of the Nativity. Kneeling, she adores the Child; and only her joined hands are missing. The arrangement of the robes shows no great art; and the bust is a wooden ball. But the head—here is another case where the artist drew from a loved model. It is too individual to be imagined, this face with

the high-arched nose, full eyes, jaw like a Gothic arch, lightly dimpled chin. She is a woman; she is also in every fiber an aristocrat. None of the great masters, it seems to me, has conveyed better than this unknown Spanish carver the feeling of a lady.

Certain other details I cannot pass over even in this rough, imperfect sketch. In the sacristy hangs an incomplete wooden crucifix, life-size. Only the torso and the thighs remain. They are enough. Without the bowed head and the pierced hands and feet, their subtle modeling conveys patient agony. There are a few Italian primitive paintings, notably a Resurrection in a recess to the right of the altar, a piece of the Giotto school and with some of Giotto's human appeal. The high altar bears a Virgin whose colored draperies have resisted most wonderfully the dingy hand of time; and over its front hang three fine embroideries on red velvet. High on a pillar stands a life-size statue with little artistic merit—it belongs to the late, over-realistic period—but great human appeal. St. Roch, according to pious legend, cured himself of plague by going out into the desert and praying. Hence he is patron saint of the plague-stricken. Now he took no provision along and he would have perished from hunger but for his little dog, which piously stole each day a loaf of bread in town and bore it to the saint. There stands St. Roch in his pilgrim hat, displaying the plague-scars on his thigh. The little dog, holding a loaf of bread in the only place where a dog can hold anything, is leaping up against his legs. The sculptor has even managed to convey a wagging tail!

So much for the cloisters; but turn at the door and



consider the reason for that saffron curtain above, and the disposal of so many statues in the dark shadows of the balcony. These objects were made for just such mystical illumination; dim churches, the only light proceeding from stained-glass windows or flickering candles. "Put them out in the sun," says a museum official, "and they fade to nothing!" Hence also the boldly painted draperies. The management of light is a chief factor in this triumph of artistic arrangement.

To the south of the church wall lies a level area like a little plateau. There, set at last completely into place, rise the arcade of the Cuxa Cloisters, major piece in this collection. Cuxa is a village of Catalan, that region in the wooded Pyrenees which before settling down as a part of France was an independent duchy and a Spanish province. In the ninth century, Catalan raised at Cuxa the great abbey of St. Michael. In the tenth, came thither Orseolo, a doge of Venice, converted by the prior of St. Michael's from evil political ways; and with him two hermits, Romuald and Marinus. All took the habit, and all became saints. But Orseolo, perhaps because of his former worldly state as well as through the miracle of lights about his tomb, grew most famous of the three. Rebuilt many times, the Abbey of Cuxa reached its final form in the twelfth century and went down into ruin during the Revolution. Piece by piece—mainly from the baths at Tarbes, near-by—Barnard collected the twelfth-century capitals, columns, arches, and other architectural fragments which figured in the arcades separating the covered galleries of Cuxa cloister from the inclosed garden. A shaft and a pediment were lacking here



and there; but Barnard found most of the important carved capitals. Before he gave over his collection, he erected one course of pillars. Breck, on behalf of the museum, set to work to restore the whole quadrangle with foundation, pediment, arches, and the arches above them which supported the thatched roof. These precious fragments are of a beautiful and distinctive marble, in color a faint rosy gray veined and spotted with rosy pink. The quarries are still working; they turn out the polished table-tops for the Parisian Cafés! Breck sent to France reliable prints and drawings of Cuxa cloisters in their glory; and stone by stone native workmen cut from the original deposits duplicates of the missing parts.

So now these cloister arches stand at last as they stood while six centuries of monks looked out upon them from rest and meditation. They form an irregular quadrangle—thirteen arches on one long side and twelve on the other—and they inclose a charming and authentic garden. Flagged paths meet at an immense, flat fountain-bowl carved from the same marble. This comes from another ruined abbey near-by; but it is very like the one, now disappeared, which for so many centuries cooled the garden of Cuxa. Between the paths the grass grows long, and this too is a realistic touch. When Cuxa was in its prime, no one dreamed of a lawn-mower! The monks simply went over it once or twice a season with shears. Minikin box-shrubs border the flags, and forget-me-nots and other tiny flowers lie strewn through the grass. A charming garden; but the point after all is the pillars and especially the carved capitals. Nothing else in the Barnard Cloisters is so crudely, oddly, whimsically beautiful

as these blocks of stone. Through a design of leaves such as never grew on sea or land peep unexpectedly fantastic faces. Other faces ring the whole capital in clusters. And next may be a holy scene whose figures defy all laws of anatomy, but whose effect radiates sanctity. The one nearest the entrance, which the visitor sees first, bears the oddest fantasy of all. At each corner is the sinister head of some fantastic hell-beast devouring a damned soul; and each head branches into two bestial bodies which form the decoration of the side.

Beauty and calm and the sense of incomprehensible but lovely and serene souls dwelling in a world which is not ours! Then perhaps the visitor turns away and looks eastward over the parapet. He is gazing down a slope—almost a cliff. Broadway, running for once through open fields, lies at the bottom of a gorge. Beyond that, the eastern ridge which borders the Harlem takes an abrupt turn. Up its steep slope curve row on row of apartment-houses; and above all rises a slender church-steeple in the Wren manner. The houses present their rear façades, unmitigated and ugly; but the serrated mass is a marvel. To the left the valley cuts through to the Harlem; and until the rose and saffron mists of New York close the view, color lies in pools over the flat roofs of the Bronx. This too is beautiful if the beholder has the eye and heart to see it; there is one beauty of the sun and another of the moon!

And so, stooping to your clemency, I leave Manhattan.











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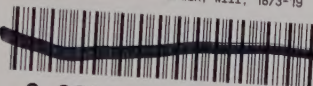
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